

GRANDPAPA AND BABY.



# A HOUSEFUL OF CHILDREN.

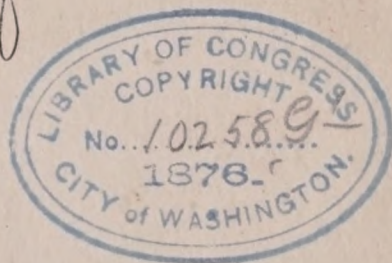
BY

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*Calling the Children  
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# A HOUSEFUL OF CHILDREN.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE HOUSE AND THE CHILDREN.

**T**HE house was a pleasant old-fashioned one, such as you will only see in some country town or village; there would not be space enough allowed on a city street, for so many rooms on the ground floor, to say nothing of the wide hall, extending from the front to the back door;—such a place for games and romps!

One broad staircase, going up from the hall, with such easy steps that a two-year-old baby could go up and down with no fear of falling;—and then the garret stairs, and you would reach the very top of the house;—and yet it was really a large house, with plenty of room for a good large family.

And the house was full of children? Yes. Of course I do not mean that there was a child in every nook and corner, occupying every seat, like the plants in a greenhouse.



To be sure there are no prettier plants in the world than these "olive plants," as we call children sometimes; the gardener has none half so precious or interesting among all his treasures, although they may have been brought from Mexico, or South America, or far-off India.

But although dear little children look very pretty, set up in rows, as we place them sometimes in an infant school, or for a school exhibition, we could not keep them so very long, you know. They must have room to jump and play about, and to eat and sleep.

So when we speak of a house full of children, we only mean that there are enough little people in it to fill the house with the happy music of children's voices, and to give the grown-up people plenty to do and to think of in caring for them.

The grown people in this house, of which I am telling you, were Dr. Brooks and his wife, and Cousin Maria. Besides, there were Nancy, and Ellen, and Mark; but Mark was not quite grown up—at least the children did not think he was—and he did not exactly live in the house, although he was there a great deal.

And the children? Ah, certainly you shall be introduced to *them*.

The best way to make you acquainted with the children



will be to show them to you all together, as they were to be seen on a certain bright Summer afternoon.

A boy who might have seen about ten Summers before the one which he was now enjoying, came running up the steps, and in at the open hall door; then, seizing a whistle which hung by a ribbon behind the door, he blew three loud blasts upon it, with a moment's pause between.

This was Jimmy—Dr. Brooks's son. Jimmy had hung the whistle there himself, and made all the household understand his plan by means of many explanations.

"When you want Mark to come in, you must blow only once—a good long *toot*, you know, but only *once*. When you want to call *me*, whistle twice; and when all the children are wanted, whistle three times. Now just try it, please, mamma, and see if it is not useful!"

I think Jimmy got the idea of this plan from the Rollo books; he had a whole set of the Rollo books, and was very fond of reading them; and it seems to me that Rollo's mother had a whistle by the door to call him in with, if I remember rightly.

The plan worked very well, so everybody declared; and they were all quite used to it by this time.

So, as the sound of the third note died on the air, the hall, which had been very quiet before Jimmy came in, was



suddenly alive with the patter of little feet, and the echo of eager questions, as the children gathered around Jimmy to know why they were called. It was plain, from the haste with which they came, that they fancied there was something pleasant in store for them.

Sister Ruth came to the door of the parlor, with a book in her hand, to ask: "What is it, Jimmy?" Ruth was Dr. Brooks's oldest child. She was not much over thirteen years old, but she was so tall, and so womanly in her ways, that you would have thought her quite a young lady.

Ruth and Jimmy could well remember a long, long time, as it seemed to them, when they had no mother;—how still and lonesome the house seemed, although their good "Cousin Maria" did her best to take care of them, and to make their home comfortable;—and how long the days were when they did not go to school, or to ride with their father, or to visit some little friend.

They well remembered, too, how glad they were when their dear, kind teacher,—Miss Agatha, as they called her,—became their mamma; and how Jimmy exulted over the other little boys who had been her scholars, telling them that he and Ruth were to have Miss Agatha all the time now, and not only in school hours!

Very soon after their new mamma came to them, they



moved from the village where they had always lived, to the home in which we find them; and a very happy home it had always been.

Rushing in through the back door into the hall, at the sound of the whistle, came the little folks, who had been at play in the garden. The foremost, and the first to hail Jimmy, was Paul, a rosy, five-year-old boy, followed by his sister Laura, two or three years older.

Laura and Paul were really orphans; they were the children of Dr. Brooks's brother, who had died suddenly, very soon after the death of his wife. They did not feel like orphans, for the good Doctor and his wife had adopted them as their own. Paul was too young when his parents died to remember them at all; Laura remembered them, but she loved her uncle and auntie just as if she were really their child.

After Laura, another little boy followed, more slowly, walking as if he were tired. This was Arthur,—quiet, little Arthur Manning. He had been for several months under Dr. Brooks's care, and one of the family.

Arthur was a motherless boy, too; and his father had been very thankful to find so pleasant a home for him in the country, and with such kind friends.

Up the door steps, one at a time, came little three-year-old Allan, calling: "Wait for me! Me, too, Jimmy!"



And, at the sound of the children's voices, came toddling to the sitting-room door, the other baby,—darling Jessie, with Mamma close behind her, coming to see what all the excitement was about.

Such a chattering you never heard, unless you happened to be, as Mamma found herself, in the midst of seven children, all talking at once.

And now that you know who they all were, and how this houseful of children came to be one family, we will listen, and find out why Jimmy blew the whistle three times.

He waited, without a word, until even little Jessie had reached him, and then he asked: "Who wants to go over to Grandpa Deane's?"

Such a shout as there was! But Mamma looked puzzled. "What do you mean, Jimmy? How can they go to-day?" she asked.

"There comes Papa to tell you all about it," explained Jimmy. "But, mamma, please say that Jessie may go with us; Ruth will take care of her; won't you, Ruthie? The dearest baby in the world!" he cried, catching her up for a jump and a kiss. "Of course she must go and see Grandpa!"

The Doctor came hurrying in, and smiled at the eager group. "I shall have no lack of passengers, I see," said he.

"We have taken Mamma by surprise. I find I must





THE DEAREST BABY IN THE WORLD.







drive over to Carville this afternoon to see Thorpe about that business, my dear; and it is so pleasant, I think I will take the two-seated light wagon, and as many of these youngsters as can be made ready to go with me."

"Oh, all of us! please, Auntie, say all!" cried Laura.

"Will not Mamma like to go herself?" asked thoughtful Ruth.

"No, darling; I would rather not go to-day; but I suppose you may all go, if Papa says so, and if you will not craze Grandma, coming down upon her so suddenly."

Mamma smiled; she knew well that Grandma Deane was always glad to see the children.

"And Jessie may go, then?" asked Ruth; "I'll take real good care of her, mamma!"

"Yes, let Baby go, too," said the Doctor; "we shall not be out late. And now you must all be ready in a twinkling, for Mark is harnessing up, and I am in a hurry."

Away flew the children to prepare for their drive. Mamma and Nancy had a busy time of it for a few moments; but all were ready when the Doctor drove around to the door.

It did not take them long to find their places: Ruth and Laura and Arthur on the wide back seat; Papa and Jimmy, with Allan between them, on the other; Paul on a box in front; and lastly, Baby Jessie was lifted up on her sister's lap, and away they went.




Old Charley, the horse, trotted off as if used to his load. He had a way of turning to look on, when the children were piling into the wagon; then he would start off with a funny shake of his head. It was as much as to say: "You count up well, and make a great noise, but I know you all;—you are not much of a load, all together!"

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE SURPRISE PARTY.

UCH a merry drive as that was! The children were in high spirits, as you may suppose, with the lovely weather, and having Papa all to themselves, and the treat in prospect.

The road to Carville lay mostly through the woods, so the little folks could talk, and laugh, and sing as much as they pleased on the way, with no fear of disturbing any one.

It was just seven miles to Grandpa Deane's. The children knew the road well, for they had often been over it. And as they approached the village, Ruth and Jimmy knew every house, and who lived in it, except two or three which had changed owners since they moved to their new home.

Baby Jessie admired the trees. She kept her little fore-



finger pointing up to the tree tops a good part of the time, exclaiming "Oh-h!" as they drove along.

Allan was always on the look-out for "pitty water," as he had called it since he first began to talk. He was sure to notice every glimpse of lake, or river, or brooklet. There had been a heavy rain a day or two before, and the water stood on a low swampy meadow which they passed. Allan thought he had discovered a new pond. "Oh, there is pitty water!" he shouted. The children all laughed, and Ruth said, "Allan would see some beauty in a mud puddle!"

Paul was quick to espy every bird or squirrel that showed itself; and Laura and Arthur were on the watch for wild flowers. So, amongst them all, they noticed and exclaimed about something that they were passing, continually.

"Charley has had his photograph taken!" said Jimmy, when the children had all been quiet a moment or two, for a wonder.

"His photograph! How could he?" cried Paul. "Where is it?" "Show it to us!" said the others.

"There!" Jimmy answered, pointing with the whip to the shadow of the faithful old horse, on the bank by the road side.

"Oh, that's only a shadow! That wasn't fair! Was it, Uncle?" asked Laura; "he said it was a *photograph*."



"Well, my dear, a photograph is a picture described by light—a *sun* picture—and so is a shadow, isn't it? My little girlie must take a joke pleasantly!"

Uncle turned his head and smiled at Laura, as he said this, and she smiled back. "I wish we could have a real photograph of Charley," she said, "he is such a dear good horse!"

"Now!" exclaimed Jimmy, "all watch, and see who will spy the church steeple first!"

They had begun to ascend the last long hill before reaching Carville. They had time enough to watch for the first glimpse, for Charley was obliged to go slowly, with his load, up the hill.

"There!" cried little Paul, who was standing up and holding on by the dash-board; "I saw it then! I saw the cross on top!"

"Oh, Paul, you couldn't! We can't see it yet!"

"Yes, he did," said Ruth; "there is just one place where you can see it, between the trees, and then you lose sight of it for some time. Paul saw it first."

"I see it *now*!" said Arthur. "Oh, yes! And now we *all* do! Now we are almost there. Good! Good! Won't we surprise them all!"

They certainly did. Grandpa Deane was sitting in the



porch, reading his paper, when the wagon drove up. He exclaimed aloud: "Why! there comes Doctor, with those blessed children!"

Down went the paper; and down went Grandma's knitting work. This was a little stocking, just about large enough for Jessie; so most likely Grandma had been thinking of the children before they came.

Jessie sprang into her Grandpa's arms, crying: "Dapity!" That was her way of calling him; and in Grandpa's arms she was sure to be, when she could reach that favored place.

Playing with his watch; stroking his whiskers with her little hand; riding on his knee to "Brambley Town"; and when tired of play, often cuddling down for a little nap; so you might often see Grandpa and Baby; and it would be hard to tell which looked the happier.

"Where is Uncle Horace?" was the general cry, when all the greetings and kisses had been given.

"Out in the work-shop, I guess; isn't he, Grandpa?" said Jimmy; and away ran all the boys to find him.

"Ah, you rogues! you rogues! Where did you come from?" cried Uncle Horace, who had heard the noise of the arrival, and was just about coming in.

He caught up little Allan, and mounted him on his shoulder. "Oh, don't go into the house yet, Uncle Horace!" said Paul; "let us see what you are making, please?"



"Ah, but I'm afraid you cannot keep a secret!" said Uncle Horace, shaking his head mysteriously.

"Oh, yes we can!" "Of course we can!" "You needn't tell the *girls*, you know!" added Jimmy.

Uncle Horace laughed. "Well," said he, "do you think Mamma will like this for a birth-day present?"

He held up a large bracket, beautifully carved, which the little boys all admired very much; and they all promised not to tell.

"And we have got a nice present for her, too," said Arthur.

"Yes, Uncle Horace; all of us helped to buy it—and Ruth and Laura;—it is such a pretty picture!"

"That's capital! We will make a new beauty spot in her parlor, wont we?"

"Yes, and oh, Uncle Horace! Aren't you coming over to see us that day? Papa said he thought you would, if we all coaxed you!"

"To be sure I am; and Grandpa and Grandma too, if they do not change their minds before the day comes."

"Oh, joy!" cried Jimmy; "let's run and tell Ruth—there she comes now, and Laura!"

"And Baby, too, I declare!" said Uncle Horace; and he stepped out to meet them as fast as he could, with his lame knee.



Poor Uncle Horace was always lame, and often ill besides. Yet he was always cheerful; and the children said he was the kindest uncle in the world.

Baby Jessie stretched out her arms to him as soon as she saw him, for she thought Uncle Horace was next best to Grandpa, evidently; and they had a grand frolic before Uncle could spare another moment for the others.

But they had enough else to do. Grandpa was sure Jimmy must have come on purpose to climb the cherry trees, for the cherries were ripe and very fine, but neither he nor Uncle Horace could pick the best of them. That was work that Jimmy liked, you may be sure, and he did not work alone; Arthur could climb to the lower branches, and the girls could reach some boughs from the fence, so they all helped.

Paul wanted to climb the ladder too, and he pouted a little, I am sorry to say, when Grandpa said "No."

"Ask Grandma for a little pail, Paul," said Jimmy, "and you and Allan pick up those that fall on the ground." This satisfied the little fellows, and Jimmy took care to drop enough to keep them busy.

When they had picked enough to fill two good sized baskets, Grandpa said they had worked enough; he did not want his little folks to get tired when they had come visiting.



One basket, the largest, was to be put in the wagon for Mamma, Grandma said; from the other she filled a large dish to put on the supper table; but the children all had some while they were picking, of course.

Then they all ran away to see Grandpa's chickens and old Dobbin, the horse. Charley had been unhitched, and put into the stall next to Dobbin, to get a lunch of sweet hay after his journey, and Paul declared Dobbin was real glad to see him. "Why," said he, "he looked as if he just wanted to *kiss* Charley!"

Then they all went to see Frisk's grave, down at the end of the garden. Frisk was a dear little dog that had belonged to their Mamma, when she lived at home, and had a troop of boys and girls for her scholars. The scholars all loved Frisk, and he loved them, and thought it his business to look after them.

As I told you, Ruth and Jimmy were among these scholars, and they remembered Frisk very well. Every time they went to his grave, they would tell the other children about his funny tricks and his knowing ways.

The grave had a neat head-stone, or board rather, to mark it. Uncle Horace made it to please the children—Frisk's little friends; and I think he guessed it would please Frisk's mistress too. At the top of the board he had carved a dog's



head, as much like Frisk's as he could make it; and underneath were these lines:

"Here lies Frisk, our faithful friend,  
Ever prompt his flock to tend.  
Little dog, so kind and true,  
Many children mourn for you."

By the time they had strewed daisies over the little dog's grave, and had scampered into every corner of the garden, they heard the Doctor's voice at the gate, and Grandma called them to come to tea.

It was rather early for tea, but Grandma knew they would be hungry after their long ride, in spite of the cherries they had eaten.

It was a very inviting tea-table around which the children gathered. Grandma Deane seemed always to have a supply of good things in her pantry; you could not take her by surprise in that respect.

Little Jessie sat up at the table, in the high chair which Jimmy knew where to find—in the hall closet. It used to be kept there for Allan, but now Uncle Horace placed a big book on a chair for him, and he thought that was much better for such a big boy.

After tea, old Charley was brought to the door again; for although the days were at the longest, Papa knew some of



the little ones would be tired and sleepy before they reached home.

“Good-bye, dear Grandma! remember your promise!”

“Yes, and Grandpa has promised too!” shouted one and another, as they were lifted into the wagon.

The promise which pleased the children so much was that, if possible, they would drive over with Uncle Horace to spend their Mamma’s birth-day at their house.

And so ended this merry surprise party.

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### CHAPTER III.

PAUL AND LUCINDA.

**T**HE little people chattered merrily as ever on the first two or three miles of the homeward way,—all but little Jessie, who had fallen asleep in Ruth’s arms almost as soon as the wheels began to turn. It was not long, however, before they grew quiet, and two or three heads were nodding by the time they reached home.

Then they were all wide awake, and eager to tell Mamma about their happy visit.

She met them in the hall, and drew them into the back room, gently hushing the merry voices.



"Poor Cousin Maria has a very bad headache;—be as quiet as you can, my darlings. Well, was Grandma glad to see you?"

"Oh yes, yes, mamma!" and they all began to talk at once, forgetting that they were to be quiet.

"I am glad you had such a nice time," said Mamma, who had been unfastening Jessie's clothes while they talked; the tired little thing had not waked when lifted from the wagon, and placed in her Mamma's arms.

"Now I am going to lay Jessie in her crib, and then I must go to Cousin Maria; she is quite sick, and needs me to nurse her this evening. It is bed-time now for you little ones, and sister will help Nancy take care of you; but be very quiet."

The children claimed a good-night kiss, and then Mamma went away with Baby, and the other little ones soon followed upstairs.

Ruth was helping Nancy put away their things and make them ready for bed, when Paul came and drew her aside to whisper to her:

"Ruth, I can't find Lucinda anywhere. What shall I do?"

"Never mind, dear. I dare say she is asleep in some snug corner. You will find her in the morning."



"But I can't go to sleep without Lucinda," said Paul, half crying. "I'm afraid she's drowned in the sea!"

"In the sea? the river, you mean; don't you?"

"No, the sea, the sea; poor Lucinda's fallen in, I guess!"

"What *does* Paul mean by the sea?" said Ruth, turning around. "He thinks his Lucinda is drowned in it."

"Oh, I know!" cried Laura. "*Our* sea, in a big tub in the garden. Mark put it out, and filled it for us to race our boats, and we had such fun! But, Paul, Lucinda isn't in that; you didn't have her out-doors at all."

"No," said Nancy, "he would be ashamed to play with the old thing in the day time, unless in some corner. But isn't it odd that he won't go to sleep without it?"

Nancy said this aside to Ruth, for Paul was very much mortified if any one made remarks about his doll. Ruth, meantime, had been hunting in the play closet, and now bethought her that the baby might have had it down in the sitting-room. She ran down, and found it there, sure enough.

Paul was all ready for bed, but stood waiting wistfully for Ruth. When she appeared with his old friend, he brightened up, and thanked her; then he cuddled down contentedly, with the doll in his arms, beside Allan, who was fast asleep, and soon followed his example.

It was an odd fancy, to be sure, for a little boy to be





THE SEA.







so fond of a doll. A forlorn, old rag-baby was Lucinda, too; but Paul had loved her dearly ever since he was old enough to notice a plaything.

I cannot tell how many times the old doll had been covered anew, but it very soon got dirty again, as only a rag-baby can. It was of no use to offer Paul a nice doll in exchange; he despised china babies, and even wax dolls, in true boy fashion; but, although full five years old, he still loved his old Lucinda.

One day, soon after Dr. Brooks brought Paul and Laura home, a lady was spending the day at the Doctor's, with her little girl, younger than Paul. Little Kitty had her doll with her,—a very pretty one, of which she seemed very fond,—and Paul, seeing her with it, ran to get his Lucinda, too, to please the little visitor.

But Kitty was afraid of it; she cried whenever he brought it near her. This vexed the little fellow very much; he could not bear to have Lucinda slighted so. He kept bobbing it up before her, saying: "Oh, ho! 'fraid of a rag-baby, are you?"

Presently his auntie came running in to see what was the matter with Kitty, for the children were playing by themselves in the nursery.

"Don't tease little Kitty, Paul," she said. "See, she is afraid of your dolly;—take it out in the other room, dear."



Paul went out of the door, but he felt very angry with Kitty. He did not put Lucinda away, but he stood some time by the crack of the door, and whenever Kitty looked up, he held up Lucinda in the crack, so that she could see her. Kitty's mother and Mrs. Brooks were in the room then, but it was quite a while before they discovered what made Kitty cry out.

Then Paul's auntie made him go and put the doll away; but she had to comfort him while she reproved him, for the poor child felt very much hurt that any one should think Lucinda a frightful object.

Paul had trouble of another kind on Lucinda's account, some time after this.

A little boy named Willie, came with his mamma to the house, and he took a great fancy to Lucinda, keeping her in his arms all the time he was there.

When Willie's mamma had made her visit, and was ready to go, she called him to put on his hat and coat. The little rogue did not want to give up the doll, so he managed to hide it under his coat, or the short skirt of his dress.

Paul had kept an anxious eye on his movements, and had tried more than once to coax him to drop Lucinda for some other plaything. Now, missing his treasure, he sprang forward



as Willie was going out of the door, crying out "Here!" in an angry tone.

"Why, what is the matter, Paul?"

"He's got my Lucinda!"

"Why, no, I think not; have you, Willie?"

Willie looked conscious, and kept one little mittened hand close to his side; so his mother searched him, and produced the doll.

Willie cried, and begged for it; but Paul stood unrelenting. "It's my Lucinda;—he can't have her!" said he.

At last his Aunt Agatha persuaded him to let Willie take Lucinda home, promising that he should go and see him the next day and get her.

In the meantime Mrs. Brooks and Cousin Maria manufactured another rag-baby as nearly like Lucinda as they could make it.

Paul was all impatience, the next day, until some one could take him to see Willie. Cousin Maria took pity on him, and went with him before dinner. When Paul went in, he marched straight up to Willie, saying grimly: "I've come for my Lucinda!"

Willie looked frightened, and held the doll behind him.

Cousin Maria was very glad to be able to settle the difficulty. She produced the new doll-baby, saying:



"Here, Willie, will you have this nice dolly, and give Paul his?"

This satisfied Willie, for he had not Paul's life-long affection for the other; and so the little boys were good friends again.

You may think Paul was a funny sort of a boy; but I know a good many little folks who could not laugh at him very much, for they have had just such odd fancies themselves.

I knew one little boy who was very fond of a bit of fur—a "Pussy," as he called it.

It began when he was a little baby; he always liked to get hold of something soft to rub against his nose. His nurse had a small shawl with a very soft fringe, which she wore a great deal; and she noticed that whenever she had that shawl on she could get her boy to sleep without any trouble; he would nestle his head down against that fringe, and "go off like a lamb," as she said.

One day the little boy's Grandma found a bit of white swan's down in her drawer, and gave it to him. He was delighted with this, and put it right up against his nose, sitting quite still with it for some time. After that, his mother was glad to keep a bit of white fur on hand, for it was about the only thing that would keep the restless little fellow still.

When this little boy was first taken to church it was



Winter time, and his mother and sisters had their muffs with them, which they would lay aside in the pew, and the child would contrive to get his head down against a muff, and then sit as still as a mouse. When Winter was gone, and the muffs were laid aside, he became so restless in church time that they feared they must leave him at home. At last his mother took a tiny bit of fur in her pocket, and gave it to him in church, and then he sat perfectly still.

This boy clung to his "Pussy" long after he was as old as Paul, in my story. When he wore pants, with two pockets in them, there was sure to be a Pussy or two nestled down in the pockets, and when he thought no one was looking, he would take one out and enjoy it awhile, holding it close to his nose.

But Paul, and this "Pussy" boy too, were bright and boyish enough about other things.

The next morning, when Paul came running down stairs with a "Hallo, Jimmy!" you would never have guessed that he could hug an old rag-baby.

As soon as breakfast was over, the little boy shouted: "Come, Lautie, Arthur, come and get out the boats!" and away they ran to the sea.

The boats were out on a race when Jimmy sounded the whistle the day before, and it was not decided which would beat.



Jimmy made one of the boats for Laura, and Mark made the other for Arthur. Paul hardly knew which he would like to win the race; but either way, it was very exciting looking on.

And there was no danger that Lucinda would be drowned, for she was lying behind the bed, where she had fallen while Paul was asleep!

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### MAMMA'S BIRTHDAY.

**T**HE children had each a garden—girls and boys. There was room enough in the large garden at Dr. Brooks's place, to set off a nice little piece of ground for each child, and not miss it.

Cousin Maria was the chief gardener, with Mark to help her. She took care of the flower-beds, and she looked after the vegetable garden, too, and the fruit trees; for the Doctor was called away from home so much that he had not much time for gardening; and as for the Doctor's wife, she said she had too many "running vines" about the house to look after out-door plants. What did she mean? *I* think her running vines had each two little feet, don't you?



Cousin Maria liked to have the children work in their gardens. She let them choose what they would plant, and she was always ready to advise them, and show them how to work.

Jimmy planted vegetables in his garden patch. He had quite a big piece of ground, for he was old enough to work it; and his father let him do what he pleased with all the vegetables that he raised.

Ruth raised flowers;—so did Arthur and Laura. Arthur's garden had a nice little pear tree in it, that he watched very carefully, for this year, it had three pears on it—the first it had borne. Laura's garden was close by the currant bushes, and the Doctor said the bushes which bordered on her ground might belong to her.

Paul and little Allan planted all sorts of things in their tiny gardens, and then pulled them up, as like as not, to see how they were getting on. It was well if they did not replant their treasures with the roots in the air.

Paul was growing wiser about gardening now, and he began to advise Allan, in a very grave way, about pulling up his things.

Baby Jessie had a little garden, too. Cousin Maria marked it off and planted it for her, and each of the older children took a turn at weeding it. It had pansies, and sweet-peas, and mignonette, and some other flowers in it.



Never were the gardens watched so anxiously as they were the week before Mamma's birthday. All the flowers were wanted, of course, and the little gardeners counted every bud, to see who would have the largest bouquet. Jimmy had a bed of Tom Thumb peas, which he hoped would be fit to pick on the birthday, and be the first mess of peas of the season, which would make them a greater treat.

Laura watched the currants. Her dear auntie was very fond of currants, and Laura wanted them to ripen up so they could have some, with raspberries, for tea on the grand occasion.

Ruth looked over the bushes a day or two before, and shook her head. "They wont be ripe enough, I am sure, Laura," she said.

Mark said so, too. "And what do you care?" said he; "there'll be plenty of these nice raspberries."

But Laura did care, and she had a bit of a secret, too. On her very own bushes, cuddled down among the leaves on the sunniest side, were a lot of bunches which Ruth had not noticed, which were turning red very fast.

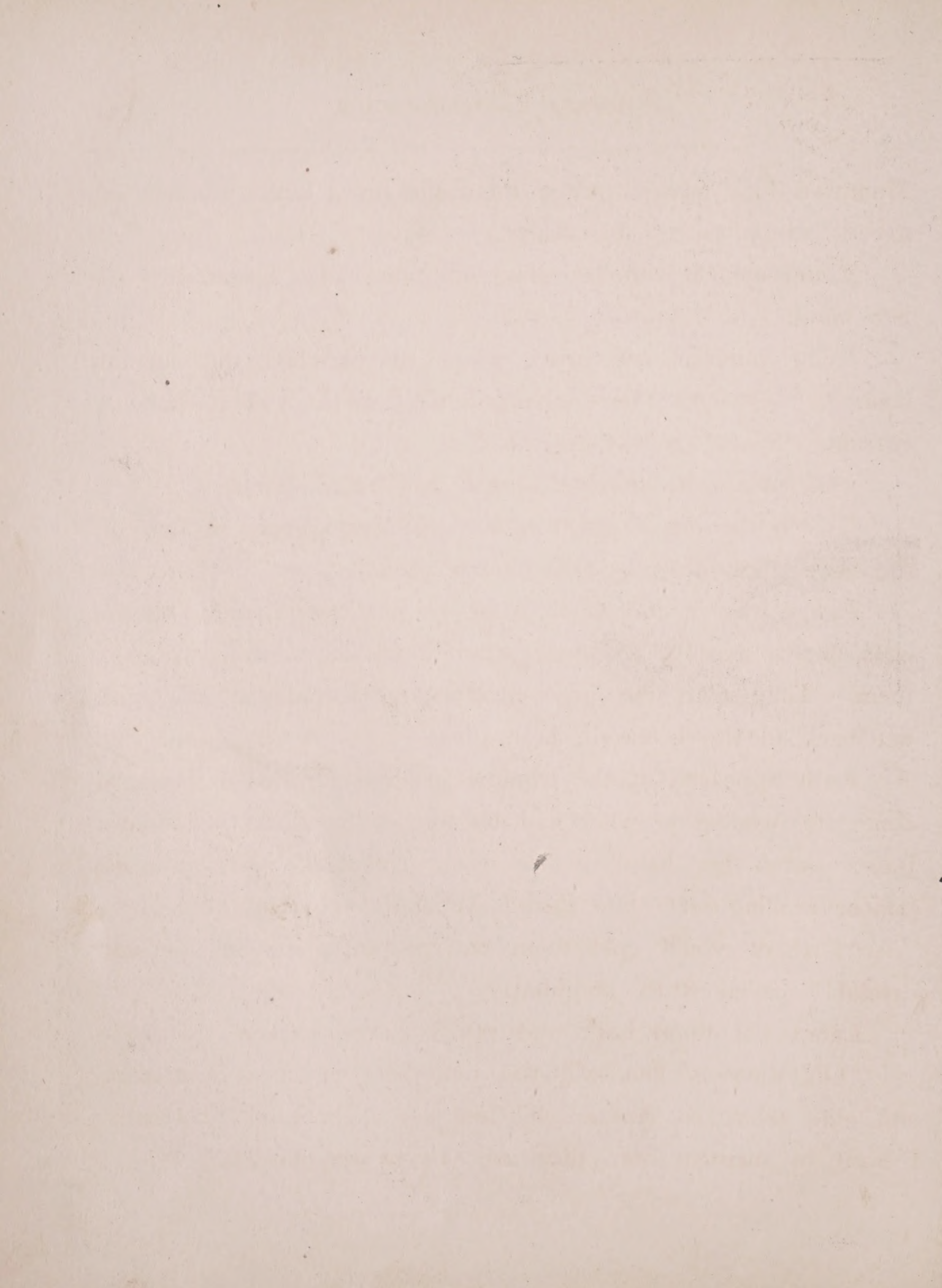
The birthday came at last, and a bright, lovely day it proved to be. Laura and Jimmy were the first to scamper out into the garden, before any of the others were dressed. Jimmy was anxious to pick his peas, and have them ready for his





WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THESE ?







Mamma's first present, when she came down stairs, so he had asked Nancy to call him early.

Laura awoke without calling, for she had a great deal on her mind.

"Oh, Jimmy," she cried, when she reached the currant bushes; "just come here one minute; I want you to taste a currant. There! isn't that ripe?"

"Of course it is; ripe as can be!" said Jimmy.

"Well, then, I've got lots of 'em; enough to fill one of the little glass dishes. Oh, I'm so glad!"

Laura was in too much haste to pick her currants to go back for a basket, so she gathered up her apron to hold them. They were fine large currants, truly, and the little girl ran back to the house in high glee.

Ruth appeared at the window just as she closed the garden gate, wondering what had become of her little bed-fellow. Laura thrust her hand in her apron and held up a pile of bunches, calling out: "See, Ruth! What do you think of these?"

"I think you'll spill them on the walk, if you are not careful!" called Ruth, laughing.

Laura put them back and ran into the kitchen.

"Oh, please, Ellen, will you put these currants in a pan, and hide them, so Auntie will not see them until tea time? I want to surprise her; they are out of my garden."



Good-natured Ellen left her chopping bowl to get the pan, and promised to put it out of sight.

"Oh, now, what shall I do? Just see my apron," cried the little girl; "it's all stained, and Auntie will see it and ask me about it!"

"Well, I think a little lady had better come for a pan or basket to pick fruit in, and not use her apron," said Ellen.

"But I was in such a hurry!" said Laura.

"'The more haste the worse speed,'" said Ellen. "But come, I'll take out the stain this time, if you'll get a basket after this!"

So Ellen took off the apron, and poured some boiling water on the stained part, laying it carefully in a basin, so as not to wet the rest of the garment. Then she hung it close by the fire to dry, and Laura waited for it, rather impatiently, for she expected her auntie would come into the kitchen very soon.

Jimmy came in first, and his step made Laura jump. "Oh, I was afraid it was Aunt Agatha!" she said.

Then Jimmy had to be told about the currants. "That's a good idea," said he. "I believe I'll have my peas a surprise, too, at dinner; if you will cook them on the sly, Ellen; will you?"

"I don't know, Jimmy; I'm not used to doing things 'on



the sly,' as you call it;" and Ellen shook her head very soberly.

"Oh, well, now, you know what I mean, you dear, good Ellen! Cook them *privately*."

"But I can't shell them privately. What would your mother think of me if I were to be gone out of the kitchen this busy morning, and all my work standing, and company a coming!"

"Oh, I'll shell them, myself, out in the barn!"

"Yes, and I'll help you, Jimmy!" said Laura.

"There, the apron is dry, and I hear your auntie coming," said Ellen, handing it to her.

Laura ran behind the door to put on her apron, and then flew out to meet her auntie and give her a birthday kiss; but Jimmy was before her.

Then all the other children came rushing down to wish Mamma "a very, very happy birthday"; and they all had so much to say that the Doctor had to wait a few moments for them all to get quiet, at prayer time.

After breakfast, away flew the little folks to their gardens to gather their flowers. Who had the most? Baby Jessie.

"That's because Cousin Maria takes care of her garden more than she does of ours," said Laura.

"Of course, because Baby can't work," Arthur answered.



"But, Lautie, I guess it's best for Baby to have the most flowers, because we don't mind having her beat us, *do* we?"

A smile chased away the fretful look on Laura's face. "No, we don't," said she; "she ought to have the prettiest bouquet for her mamma, for she is the sweetest, herself!"

Ruth proposed to arrange Jessie's flowers in a basket, with a little dish inside, to hold water. "And then," said she, "when Uncle Horace brings his bracket, we can put the basket on it."

This was pronounced a charming plan. "And oh, I do wish they would come!" said Paul. "We can't wait to give Mamma our picture."

Paul always called his auntie "Mamma" now. It began very soon after he came to her home. At first he said "Auntie," as Laura did; but one day, when Allan was calling merrily, "Mamma, dear Mamma!" Paul said, "I want to say Mamma, too!"

Poor little fellow! the word came naturally to his lips,—the first word a baby learns to say.

Mrs. Brooks caught him up in her arms, and cried over him a little, it was such a pitiful thing for an orphan child to say. But she answered him cheerfully:

"So you *shall* say Mamma, darling; just as Allan does!"

So Paul said "Mamma," and "Papa," too. But Laura



did not, yet. Very often she looked as if she wanted to, but as I have said, Laura remembered her father and mother quite well, and so it was not easy for her to make the change.


"I'm sure it's time for them to come!" echoed Arthur. "Let's run out and watch."

"Better run up and get clean faces and hands, little gardeners," said Mamma, coming out among them; "and by the time you are all ready to see them, I *think* they will be here."

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## CHAPTER V.

### AN AFTERNOON WITH UNCLE.

HEN the faces and hands had been washed, and clean aprons put on, the little people could hardly restrain their impatience. In fact, it was drawing toward the middle of the day, and the children knew that Grandma Deane liked to start early, before it grew very warm, when she had a long drive before her. They did not know that some one had called to see Grandpa Deane, on business, just as they were all ready to start;—how could they?



"Let's find something to do!" cried Arthur, when they had all been watching and listening for the wagon wheels until they were tired.

"Oh, I think we *have* something to do!" exclaimed Jimmy. "Laura, you said you would help;—don't you know?"

"What is it? Let me help, too!" Jimmy had volunteers enough to help shell his peas. Rather doubtful help some of them gave, for he had to crack open the top of each pea-pod for Allan, and even for Paul, mostly. And then the precious green peas for Mamma's birthday dinner would roll away from the little fingers toward the cracks in the barn floor, and had to be chased.

But the little ones thought they were helping, and the older ones were good-natured, so they got on very well, and the pleasant task was soon done.

"Now, let's all find good places to look out, and see which will spy Grandpa's wagon first!" cried Jimmy.

There were two ways by which the expected wagon might approach the house. Jimmy chose the front gate post; Arthur another position overlooking the same road; while Laura and Paul ran around by the Doctor's office door, and stood looking over the fence, toward the other road.

As it happened, they were the first to catch sight of the looked-for vehicle; and the shout which Paul raised, was





THE CHILDREN ON THE WATCH.







speedily echoed on all sides: "They've come! Hurrah! They've come!"

How Grandma was soon seated in the very easiest chair in the cool parlor, while half a dozen little hands were outstretched to carry away her bonnet and shawl and parasol, and how Baby Jessie screamed with delight when she saw her "Dapity," I am sure I need not describe.

And then, when the visitors were rested a little, Uncle Horace brought in his bracket; and the lovely picture—the children's birthday gift—was produced from its hiding place.

Of course Mamma was delighted; and then they all gathered around to see Uncle Horace and Jimmy arrange the "beauty spot," as they called it; with Jessie's basket of flowers on the bracket, and the picture hanging above it.

When dinner time came, Mamma found a covered dish before her, which she opened rather wonderingly, and there were Jimmy's peas, cooked in Ellen's very best style. All declared that they never had tasted sweeter peas, and Jimmy was quite proud of his gardening.

Mark *could* have gathered a good mess, a day or two earlier, from one of the beds in the large garden; but he told Cousin Maria how anxious Jimmy was to have the first, and they agreed that the peas would improve by waiting until after the birthday, and they would keep quiet about them.



After dinner, the children seized upon Uncle Horace, and led him out in triumph to the old rocking chair on the piazza, in which they seated him, and then clustered around him for a real good talk, as they said.

Uncle Horace groaned. "What am I to talk about?" said he, pretending to feel very much abused indeed.

"Oh, tell us something funny!"

"Tell us what you saw when you were coming over here!" suggested Paul.

"What I saw! Well, really, that is a task, young man! Do you suppose I can count over all the objects I saw in the course of a seven miles' ride?"

"Tell *some* of 'em, Uncle Holace!" said Allan, who was perched on his knee.

"Well, let me see! Uncle Holace saw a little girl with a basket, going in at Farmer More's gate, and she ran out quicker than she went in."

"Why, Uncle? Why did she?"

"Because a great big turkey gobbler ran after her. The little girl had a red calico frock on, and that made master Tom Turkey very angry; turkeys don't like to see anything red."

"Poor little girl! Did she have to go away with her basket empty?"

"No; Susy More saw it all from the window, and she



ran out, and drove the turkey away. She was not afraid of him."

"Oh, I wish I could see Susy More!" said Ruth; "don't you remember her, Jimmy?"

"She has grown a good-sized girl," said Uncle Horace; "but she is not as tall as our Ruth, yet."

Susy More, and her brother and sister, used to go to school with Ruth and Jimmy, in Carville.

"What else did you see, Uncle?"

"Well, when we were driving up the long hill, I saw a flock of fowls crowding around the door step of a house, to get some crumbs that a little girl threw out. When the child opened the door, a little white kitten made a spring toward it, to get in; but the child did not see her, and shut the door. So kitty found herself in the midst of the fowls, and she seemed quite frightened, and tried to back away. While I was looking, a great tall rooster bent his head down, right into the kitten's face, as if to say, 'Who are you? and who invited you to this party?' Then little white kitty made a desperate push through the crowd of hens, and scampered away."

This made all the little ones laugh.

"Please tell some more!" cried Paul.

"Oh, it is your turn now. Tell me what you have all been doing—studying lessons every day, like good children?"



"Oh no, no, Uncle Horace! Why, don't you know, it is vacation now, and Miss Dormer doesn't come at all!"

"Humph!" said Uncle Horace; "and are all these bright children learning nothing this Summer?"

The children looked puzzled. "How can we, when our teacher doesn't come?" said Arthur.

"Mamma says it's good for us to have vacation in the warm weather," observed Jimmy, "and I'm sure she's right about it."

Uncle Horace said nothing, but looked from one to another.

"We learn verses to say to Mamma," said Paul.

"And Ruth practises, and takes her music lessons," added Laura.

"And Laura and the rest sit with their eyes shut and their hands folded, I suppose."

"Why, no, Uncle Horace! you are making believe now; of course we don't!"

"What then?"

"Why, we play, and we work in our gardens, and we take turns riding about with Papa,—and oh, we have plenty of things to do!"

"Ah! then I believe you must be learning something every day, after all. *I* cannot work in the garden, or go about in the country, without learning a great many lessons."



The children looked as if they began to understand Uncle Horace now; but Jimmy said:

"I like the lessons without books best!"

"I dare say; but the book lessons must have attention in their turn, if our Jimmy would make a good and useful man, like his father."

Jimmy smiled; he liked to hear his father praised.

"Now, Uncle Horace, if we bring your cane, will you come out and see our gardens?"

Paul scampered away after the cane, without waiting for an answer, and was back, astride of the stick, in a minute.

"But first, Uncle, please come and see the new hen yard; it's real nice—all fenced off, with such high pickets!"

"Oh, and the goats!" said Laura. "Uncle Horace must see Mark's goats; they are in our barn now."

"So Mark is trying to keep goats, is he? Why does he shut them up in the barn?"

"Oh, he doesn't keep them shut up all the time, but he said he should be too busy to watch them to-day, and he was afraid they would get into our garden; they are *so* mischievous, you can't think!"

"Just wait one moment!" cried Ruth, "I want to get Jessie; she loves to see the goats. Laura, please run and get a piece of bread for her to feed them with."



Ruth soon brought out the baby, with her little white sun-bonnet on, eager to see "Nan Nan," as she called the old goat.

"Tell me what Nan Nan says, and then you shall ride on my shoulder!" said Jimmy to the little one.

"Nan Nan—baa-a!" she answered, and then made a spring into her brother's arms.

The party soon reached the barn. "Nan Nan" seemed to be looking about uneasily, as if she would have liked to get out; but Billy, the kid, was lying down, with an innocent look, as if he never thought of any mischief. They were both glad of Baby's bread, which she broke off and gave them bit by bit.

Then the barn door was closed and fastened, much to the disappointment of "Nan Nan"; and after the hennery had been inspected, the children led their uncle to the garden.

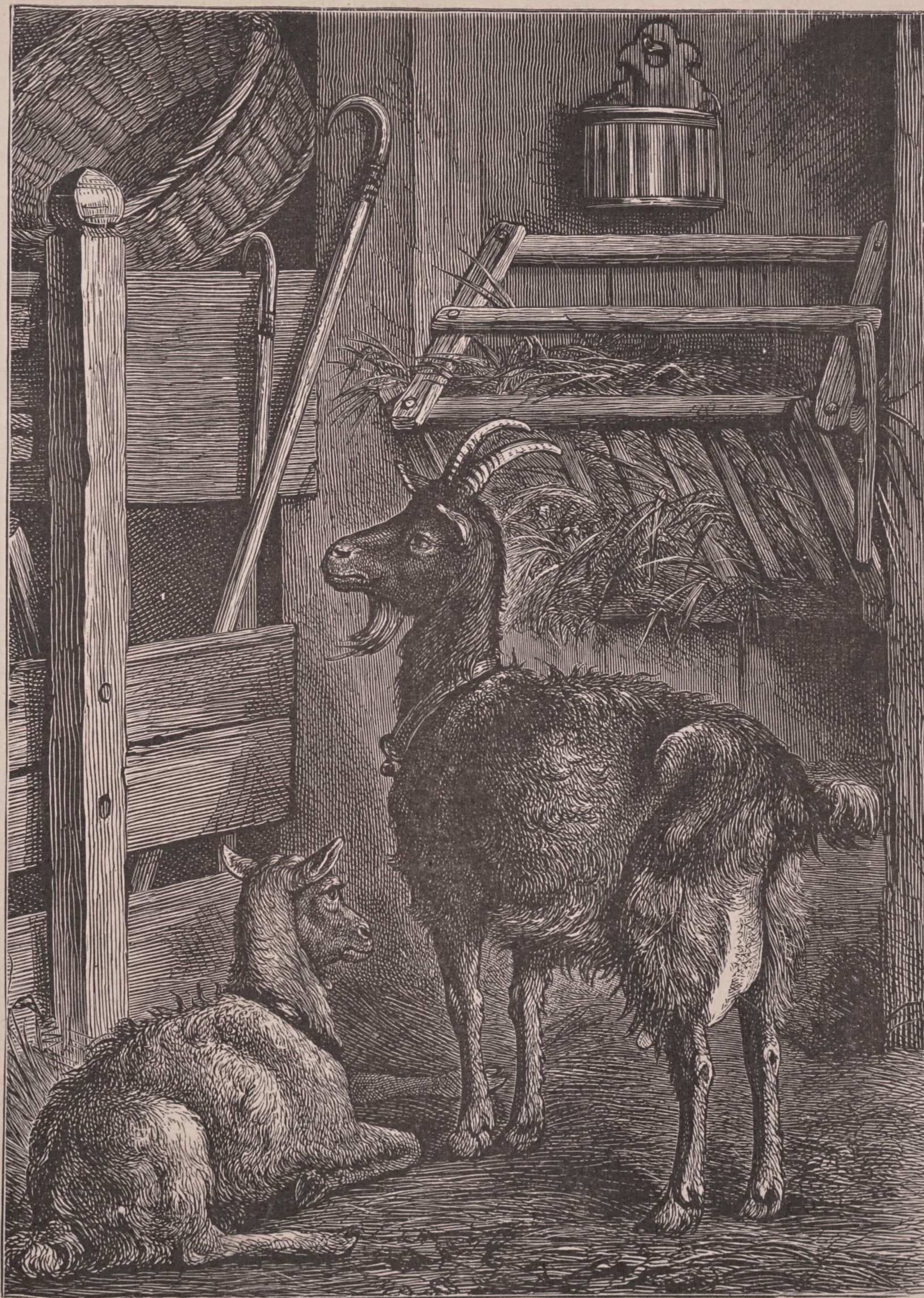
Paul displayed his pear tree, and Laura whispered to Uncle Horace the secret of her currant bushes.

They had not many flowers to show, for the very good reason that every blossom had been picked that morning; but of course their uncle understood that, for had he not helped to arrange the "beauty spot"?

Jimmy made Jessie point out her garden, and then he carried her in to her Grandpapa again.

"I think," said Uncle, "these young gardeners have done well to keep the weeds out of their beds so nicely. And,





THE GOATS.







hallo! is this your land, Jimmy? You mean to have some good vegetables, I see!"

"Yes, sir; but I haven't any fruit tree on my land. I wish I could get a cherry tree like those in Grandpa's yard, they are so early; people care more for that early kind of cherries."

"I can get you a young tree to set out," said his uncle; "but you will have to wait patiently some years for the fruit. Young trees and young children need a deal of patience and care before they are good for anything, don't they, Paul?"

The little boy nodded; but this seemed a new idea to him, and he looked quite thoughtful about it.

"Paul don't like to be called 'good for nothing,'" said Arthur.

"And Uncle Horace did not call him so. Such a big boy as our Paul can begin to show many good fruits to reward the pains taken with him, already. And as for these wee ones," said Uncle, giving Allan a high jump, "the bright blossoms and buds of promise are something to enjoy before the time of fruit."

Allan did not understand much about blossoms and buds, but he liked the jump, and this was the beginning of a grand frolic.



Uncle Horace was blindfolded, and then all the children scampered off to hide.

It was the rule, when they played hide-and-seek with Uncle, that if he called out the place where any one was, that was enough; because he was lame, and could not go hunting around very well.

So now, when all was still, Uncle Horace pulled off the handkerchief, and began walking very slowly down the path, looking about him.

Pretty soon he poked his cane into some bushes which grew close together, saying:

"I've lost my boy, Allan; where can he be?  
I'll send my cane into these bushes to see!"

Then little Allan laughed, and jumped up. "Rufie hid me in there!" said he.

"Well, now, you and I will find Ruthie and the rest of them. Hallo!

"Gentle laddie, in the tree,  
Sitting where I scarce can see,  
Please come down, and yield to me!"

"Oh dear, Uncle, what eyes you have!" laughed Jimmy, as he scrambled down.

"A man needs good eyes when he has not very good



legs," returned Uncle Horace. Then he sat down and looked about for the rest. Soon he called out:

"Those pea vines are a lively green;  
But something blue is plainly seen.  
Miss *Ruth* is in the bush, I ween!"

And Ruth came out, laughing. The hunter then cried:

"Where is Paul?  
He's not very tall,  
He *might* be behind that hen coop so small!"

A chuckle in that direction proved that he was right again.

Arthur and Laura were not so easily found. Uncle Horace made two or three wrong guesses, which greatly pleased the others, for they claimed a forfeit each time.

As soon as he had found them, Ruth said: "Now let Allan be the judge, and tell what Uncle must do to redeem these."

So they put Allan up on a bench, where he looked as grave as any judge. "Now, Allan, what must Uncle Horace do before we give him his watch key?" asked Jimmy.

"I guess he must *cry*!" said Allan.

So Uncle boo-hoo-ed, to the great delight of the little rogue. He bade him "Say please," for the next article; and to redeem the last, he cried:

"Tell us a story!"



"Good, good!" shouted the children. "Allan makes a capital judge!"

Uncle Horace thought some of them must have put him up to asking that, but Ruth said they did not.

"Well," groaned Uncle Horace, "I suppose he has learned it from the rest of you; you seem to think I am made of stories!"

"Poor, dear Uncle!" said Ruth, in a pitying tone. "Let's help him to a nice easy seat, and make him as comfortable as we can, while he tells the story!"

So the merry troop all helped him back to the chair on the piazza.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### UNCLE HORACE'S STORY.



WHEN Uncle was nicely settled, and surrounded by his attentive body-guard, Paul announced the fact, exclaiming:

"Now we are all ready!"

"Well, well, let me see! I will tell you of something that happened while I was at Thurston, a year or two ago. Have I ever told you?—about Ada and Harry?"



"No! oh no, Uncle; please tell us now! Who were Ada and Harry?"

"Two little people, belonging to a family from the city. They were stopping at the same boarding-house at which I was. I was obliged to stay in Thurston longer than I expected, and we became quite well acquainted, and used to have a good many pleasant talks."

"Just as *we* do?" asked Paul.

"Yes; just such. Ada was about your age, Paul, I should think; and her brother was a little older.

"Ada was a timid little thing. She was afraid of her shadow, almost. Harry thought himself very brave, and was always ready to defend his little sister from the dogs, the geese, or the pigs; but there was one kind of creature of which the boy stood in fear, as well as the girl. They were both sadly afraid of a cow or ox,—anything with horns."

"Why, then, they would have been afraid of Mark's Nanny goat, I suppose!" said Paul.

"Nannie Grey is afraid of the goats," said Laura, "and she *isn't* a city girl. Her mother sent her on an errand, up past Mark's house, the other day, and she was afraid to go by, because the goats were out. The old goat was tied, too; only the kid was loose."

"She must be a funny Nannie girl, to be afraid of a



Nanny goat!" said Uncle Horace, which joke set the little boys laughing so that the story had to wait some minutes.

When they were quiet, Uncle Horace continued:

"One day Harry and Ada were out on a ramble, with two or three other children. It was a lovely day, and they found plenty of flowers and berries, and wandered off quite a distance. When the village children found it was time to go home, they pointed out to Harry and Ada the shortest way to their boarding-house, and started themselves for their own home, in another direction. They did not dream that their little friends dreaded to return alone, and Harry was ashamed to ask them to go with him.

"He *was* afraid, though. The children had told him to cross the fields, toward the church spire, which was plainly in sight. There was no danger in the way that *they* would think of; but poor Harry thought of the cows. There would surely be cows in some of those fields.

"He did not mention his fears to Ada, but took her hand, saying cheerfully: 'Come, Sis; are you tired? Never mind; we'll run along, and we'll soon be home.'

"They crossed two or three fields safely, creeping under the bars of the fences, and were drawing quite near home, when, alas! they both espied a group of cows grazing, at the further side of the meadow which they had entered.



“‘Oh, Harry, see! What shall we do?’ whispered poor Ada, clinging to her brother.

“Harry was trembling, too, but he whispered back: ‘Come on, softly; perhaps they will not see us!’

“The cows did see them. It was near milking time, and they were accustomed to be driven home by their master’s children. So one old cow, fancying that Harry had come to let down the bars and take them home, began to walk along toward him, and the others all followed.

“The poor children turned and ran as fast as they could go; but, looking back, they saw the cows coming after them, at a quicker pace, and they were ready to sink with fear.

“Now, you must know, Thurston is on a river, larger than your river here. Quite a number of boats are kept by the villagers, and by the hotel people. The meadow in which the children and cows were was close by the river, and as Harry and Ada rushed wildly along, they saw, at a little distance before them, a boat, resting at the water’s edge.

“‘Oh, Harry!’ cried the little girl, ‘let’s get into that boat! Then—the dreadful—cows—can’t get us!’

“‘So we will! Keep up, Ada! we’re almost there!’

“Into the boat the children scrambled, not without wetting their feet; but they did not mind that. Harry seized an oar, and pushed with all his strength against the bank, while Ada



clung to his arm, watching the cows, for she was afraid they might pursue them even into the water.

"The sober-minded old cows had no idea of such a thing, and I have no doubt they were much astonished at the children's behavior. They stood munching and looking at them for a few moments, then quietly turned back to wait for the right children.

"There, they've gone!" said Ada.

"Yes; now if we can push over to that side we can get out, and run home."

"But this was easier said than done. The boat was moored in a little *set-back* from the river, where it did not feel the current; but Harry's energetic pushing had fairly set it afloat. Already it was drifting out of its little cove, and felt the strong current of the river.

"Harry tried again to help himself with the oar, coaxing Ada to sit down on the seat. But it was all he could do to lift it into the boat, and lay it down, without upsetting.

"Why, we're going!" cried little Ada; 'and oh, Harry, we're going *away* from the church!'

"Never mind, Sis; let's sit very still on this nice seat, and may be somebody will see us."

"So the two poor children sat, hand in hand, trembling with a new fear, as they floated down the river."





THE ESCAPE.







"Were they real naughty to get into the boat, Uncle Horace?" asked Paul.

"They were very thoughtless, my dear, but they did not mean to be naughty; I don't suppose they had ever been told not to get into a boat, for their mother would not have thought of such a thing."

"I think they were silly, any way, to be afraid of cows!" said Laura.

"Were they upset and drowned, Uncle?"

"No, Paul; our Heavenly Father was watching over the poor helpless little ones, and sent friends to save them.

"Two young gentlemen were rowing up the river; one of them noticed the drifting boat, and they steered for it, and took it in tow. They soon comforted the children, and took them safely home; but the young man who saw them first told me he never saw two such forlorn looking little things as they were, cuddled close together, alone on the wide river."

"I s'pose they were glad when they saw the other boat coming; glad enough!"

"I hope they remembered to be thankful, too!" said Uncle Horace. "But there comes your father, to see if there is anything left of me."

Tea time came all too soon, to end this happy afternoon;



for the children knew that Grandpa and Grandma would think they must be starting for home soon after tea.

But the tea time was a very pleasant time. Laura's ripe currants were placed in a small glass dish, close by the large one which was heaped full of raspberries. Everybody wanted a few currants with the raspberries, and all thought them very nice indeed, especially the one for whom they had been gathered so carefully.

"Oh!" cried Paul, when bed-time came, after the dear friends were gone; "I *wish* mamma would have a birth-day every week!"

"But *I* don't!" returned Laura; "for then she would grow old too soon!"

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## CHAPTER VII.

### SUNBEAMS.

**A**S Mrs. Brooks came through the hall the next morning, Ruth stood at the nursery door, which was partly open, peeping in.

"Oh, mamma!" she whispered; "just come here and see this little rogue!"

It was Allan, sitting up in bed, reaching after the bright











sunbeams which poured in at the window. It was a pretty picture, Ruth thought, and his mamma thought so too.

Allan heard a movement at the door, and looked around. He laughed when he saw his mamma.

"Trying to catch the sunbeams, are you, darling?" she said, and gave him a kiss.

"They slip right through my fingers—they wont stay!" said the little fellow, merrily; he was not really expecting to catch them, though he hardly knew why he could not.

"Well, jump up and be dressed, and be our little sunbeam yourself to-day," said his mamma.

"*Rufie* dress me; wont you, *Rufie*, please?"

Ruth could not resist the pleading tone, although she had something else that she wanted to do before breakfast. She gave him a jump out of bed, and began to put on his clothes.

"What did Mamma mean, *Rufie*?" said Allan, still looking at the bright sunbeams.

"When she said *you* must be a sunbeam? Why, she meant you must be bright, and good, and pleasant; then you will make us feel glad, as the sunbeams do."

"Oh!" said Allan; "yes, I'll be good, and make Mamma glad!"

Ruth thought he looked bright enough to make any one



glad. He said his little morning prayer after her, when he was dressed, and then ran gaily away to find Paul, who had dressed and gone down before Allan waked.

After breakfast the Doctor said:

"Whose turn is it to drive with me to-day? I am going in a few minutes, so be ready quickly, whoever is to go."

"Arthur! It's Arthur's turn!" said Jimmy.

"No; is it? Oh yes, I remember!" said Laura, but she looked a little disappointed.

"Do you want to go, Laura? You may have my turn if you do."

"No, indeed, I will not take your turn; Uncle says you ought to go oftener than any of us, because it does you good to ride."

"There, now, old fellow!" cried Jimmy, "be off and get your cap; you can't find anybody to give up to, this time."

The other children laughed, for Arthur was always wanting to give up, to please some one else.

"Papa, take me too?" shouted little Allan, as his father drove up to the door.

"Can't to-day, my little man; I'm going too far. Run into the office, Jimmy, and get my case."

Allan was not satisfied with "no" for an answer, and he called again, "Please, papa! I'll be good!"



His father shook his head, and kissed his hand to him, as he drove away with Arthur.

But Allan did not smile, or send a kiss to him. He felt cross, and began to cry and fret.

Allan did not count his turn like the rest, for he was so small that he could sit between his father and one of the others, so he could go very often. The Doctor was always glad to take him when he was not going too far, or expecting to be gone too long.

When the gig was quite out of sight, the little boy cried louder, and slapped Ruth when she tried to comfort him.

Pretty soon his mamma heard the noise.

"Why, why!" said she, "is my sunbeam gone? Clouds instead; and drops of rain—see!" and she caught a tear-drop on her finger, and held it up.

But little Allan cried all the more. "I don't want to be sunbeams; I want to ride with Papa!" he sobbed.

His mamma tried again to make him leave off crying, and go to his play. But as he still kept on, she took him into her own room, and placed him in a little chair, saying:

"Allan must sit here until he can be a good, pleasant little boy."

Then Mamma left the room. She did not go very far away, but Allan did not know that.



He screamed and cried a few minutes longer, then he seemed to think there was not much fun in crying with no one to listen to him, so he stopped; but he looked and felt very cross indeed.

There was a glass over the bureau across the room, which was tipped forward, as it happened; so that as the little boy looked up, he saw himself in it—his whole figure, as he sat sulking in the little chair.

It was not a pretty picture; oh, not half as pretty as that which Ruth saw and liked so much in the morning. Allan drew up his shoulders and turned his eyes away.

But he could not help looking up again and again at the cross boy in the glass, and at each look he appeared more disagreeable.

Just then Mamma came in to get her work-basket. Perhaps, too, she wanted to see if her sunbeam had come back.

"Mamma," said Allan, "I wish that shadow would go away!"

"What shadow, dear? Ah, I see! The little boy in the glass, you mean. And you do not like him because he pouts and looks cross; is that it?"

"I wish he would go away!" repeated the child.

"It is your own image in the glass, darling; it will not go away while you sit there. But I'll tell you what you can



do,—you can make the boy in the glass laugh, if you laugh at him; he looks cross just because you do.”

Allan looked up again at the glass, and then he laughed; he could not help himself.

Of course the face in the glass changed at once; there was as pleasant a boy there as you would wish to see. It made Allan laugh again, merrily, to look at him.

“Now,” said Mamma, “which do you like best? The cross boy in the glass or the sunbeam?”

“Sunbeams, I guess!” said the little fellow, and he put his arms around his mamma’s neck, and gave her a real good hug, and then a sailor kiss.

“Now you may go and play with Paul; and try to be a sunbeam all the rest of the day,” said Mamma.

There was another child who felt almost as cross as Allan about being left behind that morning. Laura had felt quite sure it was her turn to go, and when she heard her Uncle tell Mark to get up old Charley, she was delighted, for it was a lovely morning for a drive.

She would have been ashamed to let Arthur give up his turn; and yet, after all, she felt very much put out that it *was* his turn.

So the little girl moped about for an hour or more, doing nothing at all.



Jimmy called her to come and work in her garden, but she did not feel like it. Cousin Maria offered to cut out a nice white apron, and baste it, so she could hem it for her dolly; but Laura said it was too warm to sew. Baby Jessie toddled up to her and pulled her dress, but Laura shook off the little hand, saying: "I don't want to play with you, Jessie; don't tease me!"

After a while, Auntie's voice was heard calling "Laura!" and Laura was obliged to go and see what was wanted.

"Put on your hat, dear," said her auntie; "I want you to go down street, and get me another yard of this cambric, at Gaylord's."

Laura drew back, and hesitated. Then she asked: "Can't Jimmy go, or Mark, Auntie?"

"Jimmy is hard at work in his garden, and Mark is cleaning the stable. My little girl has nothing to do, and it will be good for her to be employed. Take this sample, and go directly, my child."

Mrs. Brooks had been noticing Laura's behavior, although she had not seemed to do so. She saw that she was out of temper, and thought that was the reason she was so unwilling to do the errand.

It was, partly; but there was another reason. To reach Gaylord's, Laura must pass Mr. Murdock's yard; and Mr.



Murdock kept a large dog, of which Laura was very much afraid.

She did not like to confess her fear; for it happened that at breakfast that morning, one of the children had repeated Uncle Horace's story of Harry and Ada and the cows, and Laura had called them silly again, and had declared she wouldn't be afraid of such harmless creatures. She quite forgot the dog, in her boasting.

Of course her auntie knew nothing of this, and, as I said, Laura was ashamed to speak of it; so she was obliged to go.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### LAURA'S RIDE.

**L**AURA did not see anything of the dog on her way to the store. She bought the yard of cambric, and had quite a little chat with Mr. Gaylord, who took her over to the grocery side of the store, and gave her some raisins.

The dog was quite forgotten, until she came up to Mr. Murdock's gate again. Then, alas! he suddenly sprang forward, and barked in his most alarming tone.

Poor Laura! She ran back a little way, the dog following



her. Then she tried to cross the street, but he headed her off. Then she drew herself up close to a tree, and held out both hands to keep him off, crying "Oh, oh, don't!"

Nobody saw the trouble, until Tom Smith came along, sitting on the edge of his ox-cart. He jumped off, and snapped his long whip at the dog, who ran back into the yard.

"Did he frighten you, little lady?" said he. "Well, never mind; he wouldn't hurt you, and he's gone.

"Come, now, are you too grand to ride on an ox-cart? No? Then I'll lift you up.

"Gee! Go 'long, there!"

Laura smiled when she found herself riding along the street on an ox-cart. She was very grateful to Tom Smith for not laughing at her, and for taking her up, though she wondered what made him think of it.

Tom was too kind-hearted to laugh at a child in trouble; and he offered to give her a ride, because he saw that she was trembling all over from her fright.

As they drew near Laura's home, she wanted to get down from the cart. She was afraid some of the children would see her, and ask her questions.

But then, perhaps Tom would think she did not want to be seen riding in that way, and that would never do when he had been so kind.



So Laura kept her seat until Tom stopped, with a loud "Whoa!" and lifted her down.

Just as she expected, the little boys were in the yard at play, and ran forward to see what was coming.

"Why, Laura!" cried Paul; "why, have *you* been to ride on Tom Smith's cart?"

"Yes," said Laura, hastily; "he asked me to, and it was nice!" And she ran past the children, and into the house to find her auntie.

Paul was too busy with Allan, pasturing his tin horses, to follow her. They were just making a fence around the pasture, and the horses might get away. Laura hoped he had forgotten all about the matter.

The Doctor did not get home until an hour after dinner time. Arthur looked tired, although he declared he had had a first-rate time.

When he had eaten some dinner, the Doctor made him lie down on the lounge to rest awhile, and to take a nap if he could.

Laura and the little boys had leave to go down to Mark's house and play with the goats, and they seemed to find it good fun, for they did not hurry back.

Mark's mother was a widow; she owned a small house, with a bit of garden ground, only a short distance from Dr.



Brooks's place. This was very handy for Mark, for he could take care of his mother's little garden and work for the Doctor too.

One reason that the children stayed so long playing with the goats was that Mark's mother was sitting at the window sewing, and she talked to them, and made them laugh.

So they had been gone two hours or more, when suddenly they heard the whistle blown—once, twice, thrice!

"Why, they want us all—all us children!" cried Laura. "Come, Allan, Paul, hurry!" And away she ran, followed by the others.

They found the Doctor sitting on the piazza, with Jessie on his knee, and Jimmy standing by, laughing to see the children come hurrying up.

"Papa said, 'Where are all the children?' so I thought I'd show him!" said Jimmy, laughing still.

"Oh!" said Paul; "well, it's nice to have Papa sitting still, any way!"

"Worth coming home to see?" asked the Doctor; and Paul thought it was.

"Well, now, seeing you are all here, if Ruth will look on the dining-room table, she will find a paper of lemons; I think Ellen can be coaxed to help her make some lemonade,



and then we will invite Mamma and Cousin Maria out here, for a treat.

"Oh, good! lemonade will be so nice this afternoon!"

"I'll go too, Ruthie, and crack the ice—we want plenty of ice," said Jimmy.

It was not long before they reappeared—Jimmy with a large pitcher of lemonade, followed by Ruth with a tray of glasses.

"I'll go call Mamma and Cousin Maria!" said Paul, which he did, without telling them why they were wanted; so they were quite surprised at seeing the group assembled on the piazza, and the unexpected refreshment.

"That wakes a fellow up, don't it, Arthur? you've been looking as if you had not quite finished your nap."

"Arthur enjoyed himself most too hard this morning, for a boy who does not feel very well," said the Doctor, kindly.

"But I'm all right now, Uncle Doctor!" Arthur declared. "Uncle Doctor," and "Mamma Brooks," were the names by which he most often called his kind friends.

"What did you do, Artie, and where did you go?"

"Oh, we went to ever so many places, but I did not get out except when Uncle Doctor said I'd better, 'cause he had to stay some time. One place was Mrs. Peters', and I saw her children playing in the back yard, so I went round there.



They were playing see-saw—a little girl about as old as Paul, and a little fellow who could but just keep on the board. Every time he went up he would roll up his eyes, and throw out his hands; it was fun to see him!”

“I wish we could have a see-saw; it would be such nice fun!” said Paul.

“Oh, Papa! can’t we play with those big logs, where the trees were cut down? I mean, can we have two or three of them in the yard?” said Jimmy.

“If you can *get* them there you can play with them until Mark wants to cut them up.”

“What do you want of them, Jimmy? Will you make a see-saw?”

“Yes, we’ll rig up a see-saw, and then we’ll play canoe on the grass plat—wait and you will see!”

“What else did you do, Arthur?”

“Why, I didn’t do much, but it was nice, and there seemed to be something to make me laugh all the time. We met a little chap on the long hill, driving a yoke of oxen; he had to take the big whip with both hands, and it was too funny to see him run from one side to the other, and call ‘Gee,’ and ‘Haw!’ and all at once, when he wanted to get his team on one side to let us pass!”

“Oh, but we saw something funnier than that, didn’t we,





THE SEE SAW.







Allan? You oughter have seen Laura riding on an ox-cart!"

"Now, Paul!" Laura cried, in great vexation; and her face was crimson as they all turned to look at her.

"Why, Laura Brooks!" "Did you, really?" "What for?" asked one and another.

"Well, I guess *you'd* have been glad to get up on an ox-cart, if there was a big hateful dog chasing you!"

Laura looked just ready to cry, as she said this; and the tears did start when Jimmy said, roguishly:

"I thought our brave Laura was not afraid of anything,— 'wouldn't be so silly'!"

"Stop, Jimmy, don't tease; we are all afraid sometimes. Come here, daughter, and tell me all about it."

So Laura dried her tears, and told of her fright, and how kind Tom Smith was.

"That is an ugly dog of the Murdocks'; I don't see why people keep such a dog!" said Jimmy.

"Papa, were you ever afraid of dogs and things, when you were a little boy?"

"I dare say I was, Paul. I remember quite well being terribly afraid of lions once."

"Lions! Why, I should s'pose anybody would be afraid of them!"



"Tell us about it, please! Oh dear, there is somebody at the office door! I wish people didn't want a Doctor *all* the time!"

"But I think we have had quite a nice resting time. I ought to be willing to go now, sonny; and I see I must. So, good-bye."

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE LIONS.

**T**HE Doctor's children were used to seeing him called away suddenly, but still they all looked ruefully after him, as he went away with the messenger.

"We just wanted to hear about those lions!" sighed Paul.

"Never mind; he didn't take old Charley, so it's some one in the village," said Arthur, "and perhaps he'll be home pretty soon."

Ruth laughed a little at the children's curiosity. She knew very well that there were never any lions in the region where her father was brought up, nor in any part of our country, unless they were in cages.

She went away, to practise an hour before tea. Allan and



Baby Jessie found something wonderfully funny to play in the hall,—Allan prancing about like a run-away horse, and Jessie pattering after him as fast as she could, for laughing; though she had no idea what he was pretending to be.

The four left on the piazza loitered there a while longer, when Laura cried: "There goes Mark! oh, Jimmy, see if he will help now with the logs!"

Away they all went in pursuit of Mark, who turned good naturedly and listened to their request.

"They're pretty considerable heavy," said he, "but we'll see what we can do."

"The very shortest one will do for a see-saw—just to rest the board on, you know," said Arthur.

"And these split ones are what we want for our canoes," said Jimmy; "and they're easier to move."

"Just so! Clear the track then—over she goes!"

The canoes, as Jimmy called them, were landed on the grass plat—or I should say *launched*, as the grass plat was to serve for one of the great lakes; and Mark promised to set up the see-saw as soon as he could find a good board.

By this time the tea bell rang, which obliged the young navigators to put off their voyage until another time.

As they passed the sitting-room door they all stopped



to laugh. Mamma had fallen asleep in her chair, and Cousin Maria, knowing that she was tired, had kept the little ones away until the tea bell rang. Then Allan had leave to call her, and when the children looked in he had climbed on the end of the lounge, and was kissing her awake.

Before tea was quite over the Doctor came back.

Paul began at once: "Oh, Papa!" But Arthur pulled his sleeve and whispered: "Wait until he has had some tea; it isn't fair to ask now—he's tired!"

They all quite forgot their canoes, or did not care to go out again, now that Papa had come.

So the Doctor had a comfortable cup of tea and a talk with the ladies. Then he went out to see something that Mark wanted directions about; and all this time the children waited patiently.

When at last the Doctor settled himself in his chair on the cool piazza again, the children drew around him all expectant, and he laughed at their eager faces.

"Waiting for my wonderful story, eh? Not so very wonderful, after all; only about a silly little boy."

"Oh, Uncle Doctor! I don't believe you ever were silly."

"You will see. When I was a little boy I lived in the country, where there were woods, and rocks, and streams, but not many houses. I was only about four years old when I





AWAKING MAMMA.







began to go to school with my sister, who was a little older. We had a long walk to take, for the school-house was a mile from our home. It was a lonely walk, too; but we were not afraid of the rough rocks, or the noisy brook, or the dark woods that we had to pass; not we."

"Were the lions in the woods, Papa? Did you hear 'em roar?" asked Paul, with wide open eyes.

"No, sonny; the lions that I was so much afraid of lived in a house close by the school-house. I heard one of the children say, the first day that I went to school, that the Lyons lived there; and after that I dreaded to go near the house, and when we passed it I used to keep close to my sister's side."

"Lions living in a house like folks! how funny!"

"But these Lyons *were* folks—their name was spelled with a Y instead of an I, which made a great deal of difference. I knew that they were folks, too; but I was such a silly little boy as to fancy there must be something terrible about them, because of their name.

"I remember very well one unhappy day about that time. My father wanted a bundle left at that very house, for Miss Lyon, one of the ladies of the fearful name.

"It happened that my sister could not go to school that day, and I was to go alone. My parents were not afraid to



trust me, for I was a sturdy little fellow, and I knew every step of the way.

"I was quite willing to go to school alone, but when my father told me I was to leave that bundle at Miss Lyon's door, I shook my head, and said I 'didn't want to.'

"I was ashamed to let any one know that I was afraid of the Lyons, and did not dare go to the door; but I could not get over my fear so as to venture to take the bundle.

"My father and mother talked to me, and at last they were obliged to punish me, thinking me a very naughty little boy. And so I was, for I should have told my father the real reason why I did not want to carry the bundle."

"And *then* if he had said you *must*, Papa, what ought you to have done?"

"Why, I ought to have trusted my good father; don't you think so, Lautie? I ought to have felt sure that he would not send me into any danger."

"Well—but I don't think you were very *naughty*, after all!" said Jimmy.

"Very foolish, then, I am sure you will say!" said the Doctor, smiling.

"The teacher used to send two or three of the children over every day, with a pail, to get some water from the well in the Lyons' yard.



"I often wondered that the boys and girls were not afraid to go. But they did go every day, and would come back merry and laughing, with the pail of cool, clear water.

"One day a boy had leave to go with another for water, and as he was going out he whispered, 'Come along with me; I'll ask teacher!'

"So he asked; and the teacher said yes, for she thought it would be a treat for a little mite of a boy to get down from the hard bench and scamper across the neighbors' yard. So I went with the boys, for I did not want to say I was afraid; but I trembled, and kept looking up at the house.

"All at once, as we were by the well, a window was thrown open, and a voice called out: 'Boys!' Oh, how frightened I was! I shook in my little boots, I suppose.

"'Boys,' said the lady who spoke, 'do you see that pear tree over yonder? Well, you pick up just as many pears, under that tree, as you can carry off!'"

"Oh, what dreadful lions!" laughed Jimmy.

"So I thought. We all ran off to the pear tree. I *hope* we all said 'Thank you!' They were very nice ripe pears, and we had a real feast. I don't think I was ever afraid of the Lyons any more."

Paul drew a long breath. "That's a nice story!" said he.

"And now I see Mamma coming, and I suspect she has



something to say about going to bed!" said the Doctor. "Who is all ready?"

"Oh, please, mamma, sit down with us just a little minute, before you say 'bed-time'!"

Mamma laughed, and allowed herself to be seated. Then the children gave her their own version of Papa's story, which made her laugh heartily.

But Arthur was sitting quietly, close to the Doctor, with his head resting upon his knee.

Presently he looked up and said: "Is it naughty to be afraid of things, Uncle Doctor?"

"Of what sort of things, for instance, my boy?"

"Oh, why, when you wake up in the dark, and such things." Arthur's lips trembled a little, and the Doctor knew that he must have felt these fears.

"Not naughty, exactly, my dear child," said he. "Sometimes when we have such feelings it is because we are ill, or weak, and cannot think and reason as if we were strong and well."

"But I want to tell you, Arthur, the more we learn to love and trust the good God, the less we shall be troubled with such fears."

The other children had stopped talking, and were listening now.





THE CHILD SAMUEL.







"It is growing damp," said the Doctor, "let us go in to the light, and we will look at a picture of a boy who was not afraid in the dark."

The little folks pressed around the lamp in the sitting room, and their papa took their own Bible picture book from the shelves, and turned to the picture which you will see on the opposite page.

"Oh, I know who that is—Little Samuel!"

"Tell me what you know about him," said the Doctor.

"He lived there, in the House of the Lord, with the priest Eli," said Laura.

"His mother brought him there, to stay and serve God always," added Jimmy.

"And he waked up in the night and heard some one call him," said Arthur; "you tell the rest, please, Uncle Doctor."

"He went to Eli once, twice, and again, saying, 'Here am I, for thou didst call me,' until at last Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child; and he said:

"Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He call thee, that thou shalt say: Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

"Think now of Samuel going back to his place, in the Court of the Tabernacle probably, to listen to the voice of God, and answer."



The children bent over the picture, and Paul asked, softly: "Was it dark, Papa?"

"No; the lamp was burning before the most holy place; but probably there was but a dim light in the court where Samuel was.

"Why was he not afraid, Arthur?"

"I suppose because he loved God," said the little boy.

"Yes; he was a child of God, and he trusted in Him; so he did not fear to hear His voice, and to know that God was very near him.

"And, surely, God's little children, who know that He is near them, need not be afraid of any 'terror by night,' or of dangers by day; for God is able to keep them from all evil, if they trust in Him.

"Now, good-night, my little ones; it is surely bed-time now."

The children kissed "good-night," and went away cheerfully.

Some time after Arthur was in bed, the Doctor took a shaded lamp and went softly to look at him.

He was lying awake, but he smiled and said, "I'm not afraid to-night, Uncle Doctor."

"Shall I leave a light for you, my boy?"

"No, thank you, Sir; I'd better not have it. Perhaps I shall fall asleep pretty soon, now."




"I hope you will, my brave little boy, so good-night; but, Arthur, if you feel badly in the night, at any time, you must call us."

Arthur was surprised at being called a brave little boy. He thought himself very much of a coward. He felt very happy and quiet after the Doctor left him, and when "Mamma Brooks" went in again to look at him, not long afterward, he was fast asleep.

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## CHAPTER X.

### RUTH IN COUNCIL.

NE morning, a day or two after, Ruth was running through the hall to blow the whistle twice,—she wanted Jimmy to help her mend the lid of her work-box, for Jimmy was quite skilful with tools, for so young a boy.

But Ruth stopped a moment in surprise at seeing her mother and Cousin Maria sitting with their hands folded, talking very earnestly. It was an unusual thing to see either of them sitting still at that hour of the day.

Ruth smiled, and was about to run on, when her mother called her.



"Come here, daughter; let us know what you think about this letter."

"Why, to be sure," said Cousin Maria, "Ruth is as much concerned in it as any one."

The letter was from a cousin of Mrs. Brooks; her name was Mrs. Maxwell. She wanted Mrs. Brooks to take her to board, for the rest of the Summer, with her two children.

"Oh, it will be nice to have Eva here!" exclaimed Ruth, joyfully.

Eva Maxwell and her sister Kate had spent almost a year at Grandma Deane's, in Carville, when she and Ruth were about eight years old. They went to school together, and saw each other often out of school. So Ruth felt as if she knew Eva very well, although they had not met since.

Eva's sister Kate was dead. She had a little sister now, about four years old.

Mrs. Brooks said: "It will be pleasant, I think, for you to have Eva here; but there is another little one, you know, just between the ages of our two little boys. And, with such a large family, I shall need to call upon my girlie oftener for help."

"Oh, mamma! What *would* Miss Dunn say?" laughed Ruth. "I heard her tell Cousin Maria once that she certainly thought you must be crazy, to take such a houseful of children!"



“Well, Miss Dunn sha’n’t have the children,—bless their hearts!—not one of them!” said Cousin Maria, quickly.

Cousin Maria could not bear to hear anything said against the children. There *had* been a time when people would have said that she did not like children much better than Miss Dunn. But that was all changed now. Since there had been a baby in the house, Cousin Maria seemed to understand children better, and to love them all more. These dear, winsome babies seem to hold a key in their tiny hands to unlock people’s hearts with.

Mrs. Brooks and Cousin Maria went on talking about the letter, and Ruth listened. She was pleased to think that her mamma trusted her with such plans.

“You will keep Nancy, mamma, if they come, won’t you?” she said.

“Yes, dear. I shall be able to keep Nancy, and we shall need her more than ever. And I hope, Ruthie, that Papa can buy that new horse that he needs so much, if we decide to do this.”

“And then Jimmy or Mark can drive us out with old Charley every day! Oh, mamma, I think it’s the very nicest plan that could be, and I’ll help all I can!” cried Ruth.

“Besides, after all,” said Cousin Maria, “it will not be like taking strangers to board. Suppose we consider it settled, Cousin?”



"And may I tell Jimmy, mamma?"

Away flew Ruth, once more, to find her brother; but she almost forgot the broken work-box, in telling the news.

Jimmy seemed not overjoyed at hearing of the expected friends. He did not remember Eva very well, and felt doubtful about having two strange little girls brought in among them.

But his eyes brightened when Ruth spoke of the new horse.

"Oh, I hope Papa can buy him!" said he. "Do you know, Ruth, he needs a young horse *ever* so much. And then he wants Arthur to ride every day, and we would all like to go, but old Charley has to go on the rounds so much now that we can scarcely ever have him.

"But I don't see," he added, doubtfully, "how Mrs. Maxwell's coming will get the horse."

"Why, she wants to board here, Jimmy, and she always pays a good price for board," Ruth said, with the air of a person who understood all about the business. "Besides, Mamma thinks she will want to make some arrangement about the horse herself; for she will enjoy driving about the country, too."

"All right; so she shall, and I'll be her driver. Hurrah!" cried Jimmy, tossing his hat in the air.

"Jimmy, do you know where Allan is?" said Nancy, a





ALLAN FEEDING THE CHICKS.







few moments after. "His pa wants to take him a riding, and I can't find him, high or low!"

Ruth and Jimmy started at once to look for the little fellow. They knew their mamma would be anxious if she knew he had been missing many minutes.

It did not take them long to find him. He had taken his little basket into the barn, and filled it with grain, and was showering down handfuls among a brood of young chickens, around the corner of the barn.

"Oh, Allan, what a quantity! You'll kill those poor things with kindness. Who gave you all that?"

"I got it my own self, out of the barrel!"

"I should think so!" said Ruth. "Come, darling, the chicks have had enough for this time;—let me put up the basket, and you come and get ready to go with Papa!"

It was Laura's turn to go that morning, for the Doctor had not been able to take any of the children with him since the day Arthur went.

She was running in to get ready when told she might go, but she happened to see Arthur sitting on the piazza, leaning his head upon the rail.

"Are you going to ride? That's nice!" said he. "I'm glad your turn has come at last."

Laura noticed that he looked pale, and she remembered



that when they called him to play in the yard he had said he was tired.

Laura paused a moment irresolutely, inside the hall door. Then, instead of going to get her hat, she rushed off to the office to speak to her uncle, and soon reappeared on the piazza with Arthur's hat, and his Summer overcoat on her arm.

"Come, sir, Uncle says you are to put this on, because there's a wind this morning, and be ready in a moment."

"But, Laura, it's your turn!"

"Oh, never mind turns! You are sick, and it'll do you good to go; and I'm well and I'd just as lief play with the boys; so, come!"

"Is Arthur going? Oh, I'm glad, 'cause he shows me all the funny things!" cried Allan, as he came out.

"There, now, you see Allan would rather have you, so it's all right. Good-bye!" And Laura ran away lest she *should* be sorry when they drove off.

"Why, Laura!" Jimmy exclaimed, when she came back to the canoes; "did you let Arthur go in your place? I know you did; it was real nice of you, too! Never mind, when Pa gets his new horse, we will have all the drives we want."

They had capital fun that morning, managing their canoes. They sat on the logs—the flat side, of course—and had stout sticks for paddles, with which they kept themselves from



rocking over; for the logs were so large that they could do considerable rocking, though they did not get ahead much, or even sideways; they could only make believe cross the lake.

It was well they could not, for Ellen would have scolded some, if those heavy logs had been dragged about much, over her bleaching ground.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE RIVER.

**T**HE Doctor's house stood not far from the river—the busy important river which kept all the factories in Preston at work; besides furnishing several washerwomen with all the water for their laundry work, brought every day fresh from the hills; and not to speak of the small duties which must be attended to as it hurried along, such as watering the roots of the old trees which grew so close to its bank on purpose to claim this care, and washing the faces of the innumerable stones, big and little, which lay directly in its course.

Indeed that river had some right to talk loudly of its good deeds, as it hastened on. But like some others who



talk and boast too much, it was apt to do mischief sometimes.

The Doctor's children had not been allowed to go to the river to play without some older person with them; for it was a swift stream when at its usual height, and was known to have deep places sometimes near the banks.

But this Summer, with which our story has to do, the river was very low. There had been but one or two rains of any consequence since Spring—quite early in the Spring.

So the poor river had much ado to find water enough for its daily work. The factories could scarcely get on; the roots of the old trees stood more than ever exposed to view, and looked very dry; and a good many of the stones had not had their faces washed for weeks.

Poor river! no wonder that it dwindled and shrank, creeping along among the stones as if quite discouraged and ashamed.

But, whatever the farmers thought, and the factory people said, the children thought it was fine sport to have the river so low. They had leave very often to go down there for an hour's play on the bank, for as the Doctor said, they could not drown themselves if they tried.

One day—the day before Mrs. Maxwell and her children were expected, the Doctor wanted his wife to go with him to



make some calls. He told her she would be so busy after her cousin came that he should not be able to coax her out.

"Do you not think we shall have a shower this afternoon?" she asked, looking out at the sky.

The children all laughed. "Oh, mamma!" cried Jimmy, "don't you want a good excuse to stay at home and sew?"

"I cannot say that I believe much in showers now-a-days," said the Doctor; "at any rate we shall not get wet until a shower comes, and if we are caught while out we may be glad to be hindered for the sake of the rain."

So Mamma made herself ready for her drive, but as she was going out, she turned back and said to Cousin Maria:

"Those clouds do certainly threaten a little; I would not let the children go far from the house this afternoon."

It was a sultry day, and no one seemed to feel like doing much, after Mamma had gone.

Nancy had only to look after Jessie and Allan, so Ruth curled herself up comfortably in a large chair by the window to read an interesting book; for as the two babies were all right, she felt like letting the others look out for themselves.

"You don't want to play checkers with me, do you, Ruthie?" said Arthur, in a voice that sounded as if he were pretty sure she did not care to just then.



"Ask Jimmy, please, Artie; I would rather read a little while."

Jimmy didn't care to; and Laura exclaimed, "Oh, it's too warm to sit in the house and bother with checkers!"

"We might sit out on the piazza," Arthur suggested.

"There is not a breath of air there!" said Laura, and she walked away down the gravel path.

"I'll play with you, Arthur; show *me* how to play!" said Paul.

Now there was not much fun in playing and teaching at the same time; but Arthur consented with a half sigh, for he had nothing better to do; his head ached if he tried to read.

Cousin Maria was sitting by, darning a pile of stockings; and she said kindly:

"Sit here by me, and I'll show Paul how to move."

"Oh, that's nice!" cried Paul; "now look out, old fellow, or I'll beat you!"

Arthur brightened up at the chance of a game with Cousin Maria, as it really was; and all three were soon engaged over the board.

"What shall we do?" asked Jimmy, as he and Laura met in the garden.

"I don't know," she said, yawning; "it's a stupid afternoon. I wish we could go to the river."



"Well, let's go,—you and I; the others are all at something else, and we can have a lot of fun by ourselves!"

"But," hesitated Laura, "I *thought* I heard Auntie say to Cousin Maria that 'the children had better not go far from the house, because it might rain.'"

"Well, if there had been any rain to come from those clouds we should have had it before this; you see there are no clouds now, to speak of,—and besides, Mamma meant the little boys and *all*; *you* would be all right with me, if the others didn't come.

"Pick up your hat and come on!" continued Jimmy; "I know Mamma would say 'yes' if she were here."

"Hadn't we better ask Cousin Maria?"

"Oh, you know she is always afraid to let us stir out of the shadow of the house, when Mamma is away! I'll tell Mark where we are going, and we'll be back, I dare say, before any one misses us."

So, as they ran down the path, Jimmy called out "Mark! We are going to the river to play a little while; if any body asks after us you can tell where we are."

Mark nodded, and went on with his work; he knew that the children had been to the river almost every day, and thought no more about it.

Reaching the riverside the children fancied themselves



amused for a few moments, but it was too sultry to feel much interest even in a fleet of chips.

"Laura, I believe I can wade over to the island as easy as not!" said Jimmy; "I am going to do it!" and he began to take off his shoes and stockings.

"But *I* can't!" said Laura, "and there's no fun sitting here alone."

"Well, I'll carry you over; you can't say but what that will be fun,—come on!"

Jimmy seized Laura in his arms and started for the island.

This was not much more than a large rock, in the middle of the river; in fact it was only since the water had been so low that the children had dignified it with the name of The Island; usually there was only the top of the rock to be seen above the water.

Jimmy easily reached the island by wading carefully, and stepping from stone to stone, although Laura was something of a bundle to carry.

"Here we are!" she cried, as Jimmy landed her on the rock; "I *did* think you'd drop me, Jimmy!"

"Pooh!" said he, "you're as light as a feather! I could carry you over to the other side.

"Say, let's do it, Laura, we can't do anything here, for





GOING TO THE ISLAND.







there's hardly room to stand. And see, there are good stepping stones all the way to the bank; you could get over yourself, only you might wet your feet. Come, here she goes!"

On the other bank the children found various sources of amusement; it was something new to be across the river from home.

Soon Laura's bright eyes espied a few ripe blackberries, and in pursuit of more they wandered quite into a piece of woods which bordered the river on this side. It was cool and pleasant in among the trees and brush, and the two young truants took no thought how the time was passing and how far they were from home, until they were both startled by a few heavy drops of rain.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### OUT IN THE STORM.

**H**EAVY, pelting drops they were; and the children glanced up at the darkening sky, and then at each other, in alarm.

"I declare!" cried Jimmy, "Mamma is a good weather prophet, after all! Come, Laura, we had better get across the river again as fast as we can."



But before they could find the way back to their crossing-place the storm was upon them; and what a storm it was!

The wind blew almost like a hurricane, swaying the tops of the great trees, as if they were reeds.

Then the lightning began to play, and the thunder was so terrific that it was no wonder Laura clung close to Jimmy, and looked pale and frightened, crying, "Oh, what shall we do?"

And now the rain fell in perfect torrents,—“sheets of water,” as Jimmy described it. Again a blinding flash, and at the same instant, almost, a deafening peal.

“That struck somewhere near!” thought Jimmy; “we mustn’t stay under this tree,—father says it isn’t safe.”

He did not want to frighten Laura, so he only said: “Come, let’s run and see if we can’t get under some shed; we can’t be much wetter than we are!” and he took her hand and started, away from the trees, up the river bank.

There was no shed in sight, but they soon came to a pile of old boards; Jimmy stopped, and managed to pull out two or three of them, so that they could crawl under,—and very glad they were of even this poor protection from the pouring rain.

“Oh, Jimmy, see the river, how it foams.”

“And the water is getting higher. Why, Laura, I don’t believe we can cross on the stones again to-day.”

“Then, what *shall* we do?”



"We must go round by the bridge, when it stops raining. Lautie!" added Jimmy, "Mamma knew best. *I* coaxed you into this scrape, and I'm real sorry!"

"It isn't all your fault. I wanted to come!" said Laura; and then she hugged his arm, and they were both silent, looking out upon the fury of a storm which filled stouter hearts than theirs with dismay, that afternoon.

Jimmy pronounced his mamma "a weather prophet"; but if she or the Doctor could have had any idea that such a storm was coming, of course they would not have ventured away from home.

The clouds gathered blackness very suddenly, while they were calling on some friends, about two miles from home; and as they saw then that a shower was surely coming, the Doctor put his horse under shelter, and they sat down with their friends to wait until it was over.

They had a long time to wait, but they were very thankful to be safe under shelter. The ladies at the house rejoiced because the Doctor and Mrs. Brooks were obliged to stay and make them a good visit. The Doctor said it was well it was a leisure afternoon, and he had no very sick people waiting for him; and Mrs. Brooks said she was glad to think the children were all safe at home. She little imagined that two were out, exposed to the tempest, at that very time.



In the meantime, how was it at home? As the sky darkened, and the rain-drops began to fall, Cousin Maria started up to see to the windows, and make sure that all the children were under the roof.

Nancy was just bringing the little ones in at the back door. They had been out to see the chickens. Paul and Arthur were yet in the sitting-room; but where were Jimmy and Laura?

"Ruth, do you know where those children can be?" Cousin Maria asked, anxiously.

Ruth ran up garret, and Nancy threw a shawl over her head and rushed out to the barn, but no children were there.

"Oh, I think they must be down at Mark's!" exclaimed Ruth. "He's building some wonderful engine, or something of that sort, that Jimmy is interested about. And I remember, now, seeing them call to him as he was in the garden, a little while ago, and then they ran out of the gate.

"Of course they must be there," Ruth continued; "they wouldn't go off any where else, without leave!"

Ruth did not think that her "little while" was full two hours. She did not take much note of time when engaged with a book.

"Well, I suppose they must be there, but I wish they were at home. And there's the Doctor out, too, and your mamma; only, think!"



It was of no use to think or to worry; no one could go out now, for the storm was fearful. Cousin Maria had to give her attention to Arthur, who always suffered in a thunder-storm from sickness. Little Jessie cried, and Allan was restless at being brought into the house, so Ruth went to help pacify them.

The time seemed long and dismal enough before the rain held up, and Mark was seen making his way through the pools of water towards the house.

Cousin Maria met him at the door; he seemed in a hurry, and exclaimed:

“Oh, hasn’t this been dreadful, ma’am! The bridge is washed away, just above here, they say, and I’ll have to go away round to get the cows; so I thought I’d run over and tell you first.”

“But the children—Jimmy and Laura, Mark; aren’t they at your house?”

“Laura! Jimmy! why, no, ma’am!”

Cousin Maria and Ruth looked frightened; suddenly Mark exclaimed, striking his hands together:

“You don’t tell me they haven’t been at home since they went to the river?”

“They have not been seen since they were speaking to you in the garden.”



"Well, I think the cows 'll have to go until I find *them*!" muttered Mark, and he strode off hastily.

Tea was ready, but the older ones felt too anxious to partake of it. It was a great relief when, some little time after, the Doctor drove into the yard.

"Run and tell him, Ruthie dear, before he unhitches Charley."

Ruth did so; her papa asked a few rapid questions, then turned and drove out again; while Mamma came in with Ruth, her face showing how anxious she felt.

Mark ran to the riverside, and seeing no trace of the children, he began to enquire at the houses near; he never once thought that they could have crossed the river. No one would have been likely to think of two children crossing on the stones, who looked at the river as it was then, foaming and dashing along, carrying with it fragments from the loosened bridge, and other stolen property.

The children themselves, as soon as they might venture out from their hiding-place, had hurried up to the bridge, to find it gone, as Mark said.

They must follow the river, in its winding course, around to the bridge next below. But it was hard work making their way along through mud and water, and over broken limbs of trees, all tired and wet as they were.











Very thankful they were, as they reached the bridge, to see the Doctor coming to meet them. He had driven down the river directly, scarcely knowing what he feared.

"How did this happen, Jimmy?" he asked, as they were driving rapidly home.

Jimmy told the whole story, and the Doctor said not a word more, only drawing the lap-robe closely about Laura, who was shivering as if in an ague.

A little while after, as she sat wrapped in a blanket, with her feet in a pan of hot water, the little girl found words to tell her kind auntie all about the disobedience, and the punishment they had suffered.

Jimmy took most of the blame to himself, in telling his story. His father went with him to his room, to see that everything was done to prevent his taking cold from the exposure. I do not know what he said to him while there; but Jimmy was very quiet and thoughtful when he came down to get his supper, and he was especially so at the time of evening prayer.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE NEW COMERS.

**A**T breakfast, the next morning, the Doctor remarked:  
“Our mail will be late to-day, for the railroad bridge was damaged by the storm yesterday.”

“It seems hardly possible that so much mischief could be done in so short a time,” said Cousin Maria.

“It does not take many hours of such rain as we had yesterday to raise this river so that it will do mischief,” said the Doctor. “Some think we had more than a mere shower; they think we had the benefit of a water-spout in this neighborhood.”

“What is a water-spout, Uncle Doctor?” asked Arthur.

Jimmy looked up eagerly, and his papa said: “Can you tell us, Jimmy?”

“Yes, sir; I saw a picture of one a little while ago. It was a mass of black clouds, shaped like a great tunnel. But it was over the sea, Papa; I did not know that we ever had one on the land.”

“Sometimes; but not very often. I suppose those observed over the ocean are larger, and discharge greater quantities of water than they ever do over the land.”



"Why, mamma," said Ruth, "if we get no mail to-day we shall not know when to expect Mrs. Maxwell."

"Oh, we shall have the mail, only a little later than usual," said the Doctor.

When the mail arrived, it brought some unexpected news. Mrs. Maxwell wrote that her husband was ill, and she could not leave him; she was afraid, too, that he would not be well enough for her to leave him for some weeks.

The letter went on to ask if Mrs. Brooks and the Doctor would be willing to take the children for a few weeks.

"I know," Mrs. Maxwell wrote, "that I am asking a great favor, and you must not hesitate to say 'No' if you feel that they will make you too much trouble."

So now there was another council; but the result of it was a letter to Mrs. Maxwell, saying that she might send Eva and little Marion to Preston at once.

This was Thursday, and the children arrived on Saturday, in the care of a friend.

Eva remembered her "Aunt Agatha," as she used to call her, very well, and seemed glad to see her again. She was not nearly as tall or large as Ruth, though not much younger; she seemed very different, in every way, from what the children had fancied; so they were rather shy at first of the young stranger.



But little Marion had no idea of being shy with any one; she seemed perfectly at home at once, and full of glee at being out of the tiresome cars, and free to skip around as she pleased. She made friends with Paul and Allan directly, and they led her off to see the chickens, and the cat, and other wonders, before her auntie had a chance to wash the dust from her face and hands.

Eva went upstairs as soon as their trunks were carried up, and came down presently nicely dressed in a clean muslin.

Then she seated herself in the parlor with the air of a young lady; she seemed in no hurry to make acquaintance with the children; so, although one and another looked in upon her, they soon retreated again, and amused themselves with watching Marion's lively movements.

There was need that some one should watch her in good earnest. There was not a room in the house into which she had not found the way before long; the children's playthings had all been examined and tossed aside; little Jessie hugged until her lip began to curl; and everything rummaged which was within her reach.

Eva seemed to give herself no concern about her little sister, so Ruth kept an eye upon her, as well as she could.

Having missed her for a few moments she found her in the Doctor's office, just climbing up to examine some bottles on a shelf.



“Oh, Marion! you must never come in here!” she cried, and brought her back into the sitting-room.

“What a little witch she is, mamma!” she sighed; “what shall we do with her?” for Marion had slid from her lap and was running out at the front door.

“Don’t be discouraged, dear; the little thing is excited now—everything is new to her. She will do better after a day or two.”

“I should think Eva would look after her a little,” Ruth said; and she wanted to say more, for she knew her mamma must be disappointed in Eva, too.

“I suppose Eva is not used to taking any care of her at home, so perhaps she does not think of it; never mind, darling,” she added, kissing Ruth’s forehead, “we will not talk of Eva now.”

“And I suppose I must chase that child!” said Ruth; but Cousin Maria laid down her work, saying: “Let me try her a little while; you may go and see Eva.”

Cousin Maria went to the door and called the little girl, who came to her readily.

“Come, Marion,” she said, “don’t you want to write a letter to your mamma? She will want to know how you came here in the cars.”

The child was delighted with this proposal. Cousin Maria



gave her a pencil and paper. She looked up roguishly at first, but then busied herself for an hour nearly, covering the paper with wonderful writing, crossed and re-crossed.

"Cannot you make friends with Eva, Ruthie, dear?" said her mamma. "She is sitting quite by herself; it is not very polite to leave her so."

"I'll try," said Ruth. "But, mamma, does it seem as if she *could* be Eva Maxwell?"

Ruth sat down on the sofa, by Eva, who was turning over the pages of an album, and began to ask her questions about the journey; but it was very hard to talk with only "Yes" or "No" for answer.

"Wouldn't you like to come out and see our garden before tea?" Ruth asked, desperately. But Eva glanced down at her delicate dress, and said, "No, thank you; I'd rather rest this afternoon."

Poor Ruth did not know what to say next. To her great relief, her mamma came in soon, and began to talk to Eva about her home, and her father and mother. And then the tea bell rang.

Ruth and Jimmy were glad that the next day was Sunday. "She cannot spoil that, with her fine lady airs," said Jimmy; "but, oh dear! I wish she had stayed at home!"

To tell the truth, Eva was acting a part,—*"putting on,"* as





WRITING TO MAMMA.







the children would say. It was not like her to be so stiff and formal; and so, before Sunday was over, the stiffness began to wear off, in spite of herself, and she seemed much more friendly.

The next morning she was ready to accompany Jimmy and Arthur, to see the goats, and even to run a race in the garden. Eva had no idea of cheating herself out of country pleasures. She only wanted to make a grand impression upon the young people at first.

But Ruth and Jimmy and the younger children almost forgot the young strangers that day, in the pleasure of welcoming another new-comer. This was Bob, the Doctor's new horse,—for the Doctor had quite decided that a new horse he must have.

Mark brought him into the yard, when he led him home from Mr. Murdock's, and paraded him up and down before the front door, while all the children stood out upon the steps to admire him.

"I thought you had a horse," said Eva.

"Yes; old Charley. But Papa needs another now, he has to go so far, and sometimes he has to drive out two or three times a day."

"I'd like to drive this fellow, papa!" said Jimmy, patting his neck; "he's a beauty!"



"You wont love him as well as you do old Charley, will you?" asked Paul, reproachfully.

"Why, no,—of course we shall *love* old Charley best; but I *like* Bob. Are you going to try him, to-day, papa?"

"Yes; and I must be off at once. Who goes with me to-day?"

The children would all have liked to try the new horse, but they all hung back, remembering Eva, and Jimmy whispered to his father.

"I hardly think Eva would enjoy going with me to-day," he answered, "for I must stop at several places, and she would not like sitting out alone. Besides, I think I must take one of my boys, who can hold the horse for me, for I don't know yet how he will stand."

So it was decided that Jimmy should go with his father; and Mark was to harness Charley to the two-seated wagon, and take the rest out for a drive.

"Is the old harness safe?" asked Mamma, anxiously.

"Yes; Mark and I have looked it all over,—you need not be afraid to trust the precious load with the old harness or the old horse!" said the Doctor.

So the "precious load" was stowed in the wagon and driven off. The children had a merry time; little Marion laughed with delight all the way, and Eva herself could not help joining in the laughing and singing.



"I guess you couldn't laugh and sing this way if you were behind Mr. Bob!" said Mark; "he would be apt to prick up his ears a little."

"No," said Ruth; and she sang:

"Old friends and true friends,  
Ne'er give them up for new friends!"

"We'll remember that, old Charley!"

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### A QUARREL AND ITS ENDING.

**A**FTER a few days the houseful of children settled down again into the old pleasant ways. Little Marion very soon learned that there were some things she must not do, and that Auntie must be minded. She played very nicely with Allan, and Paul generally found himself with these two, although he *thought* he liked better to go with the older ones.

Eva managed to amuse herself in various ways, but she did not seem to "belong" with either of the others, to use one of Laura's words.

She talked most with Arthur, and played checkers with him every day. This suited the others very well, for Laura



liked better to play with Jimmy out doors; but when Arthur was too tired to go out, she sometimes felt as if she ought to stay and play with him.

"It is real kind of Eva to stay with Arthur so much, isn't it?" said Ruth one day.

Jimmy laughed in a knowing way, and said: "Just as if she didn't know that his father is a rich man!"

"Oh, Jimmy," Ruth answered, "that is too bad; you don't know that she is thinking of any such thing. Mamma would say that was *uncharitable*."

"Well, any way, I never saw any one who thought so much of rich people as Eva does!" he said.

Jimmy did not like Eva at all; and Eva seemed to take every chance to provoke him, when they were together; and she could say very provoking things.

One day little Marion was not feeling very well, and she took a fancy to cling to Eva. Eva bore it for a short time, then she put her away, saying impatiently: "Don't, Marie; I wish you would run away, you tire me so!"

"Come here, Marie, Jimmy will show you something funny!" He took her up, and produced something from his pocket to amuse her, saying: "Such a sister as your's isn't worth having, is she, you poor little thing?"

Eva turned and said, coolly: "Mamma didn't send me



into the country to tend baby,—she pays other people to do that!”

Jimmy was very angry at this. He put Marion down, and rushed out of the room. Ruth and Arthur were sitting in the room at the time. Ruth felt quite as angry as Jimmy for a moment, but she tried hard to keep still, and presently she too stole softly out, and went up into her own room.

Arthur sat still, but he looked grieved and sorry; and a glance at his face made Eva feel very uncomfortable.

After a little while, Ruth came down to look for Jimmy. He was not to be seen, and she asked her mamma if she knew where he had gone.

“He wanted to go down to the river, to fish a little while. Do you know what was the matter with him, Ruth? Something had gone wrong.”

“It was something Eva said that vexed him. May I go to him, mamma? Can you spare me a little while?”

“Certainly, dear; and Ruthie, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers.’ I know you will remember that.”

Ruth smiled, and then caught up her sun-hat and went down to the river. She knew where Jimmy’s fishing place was,—at the Bend, as they called it,—where the water was quite deep near the bank. It was some ways beyond the place where the children went to play when the river was low.



Ruth found Jimmy there, as she expected; he was dangling his line in the water, but evidently he was not very intent upon it.

"Shall I disturb the fish if I come too?"

Jimmy looked up and laughed. "I don't expect to catch any fish this bright day. I only came to get cooled off."

Ruth took off her hat, as Jimmy had done, for they were in the shade of some large trees, and threw herself down on the bank beside him.

"Did you ever hear any one talk so hatefully as Eva does?" he exclaimed; "just as if money could buy such care as Mamma gives them! and she don't seem to care a straw for her own little sister!"

"But, Jimmy, perhaps it was that—what you said—that provoked her; may be she *does* care a good deal for Marie!"

Jimmy danced his bob up and down in such a way that no fish would have dreamed of going for it; he did not like to think that he was partly to blame himself, after all.

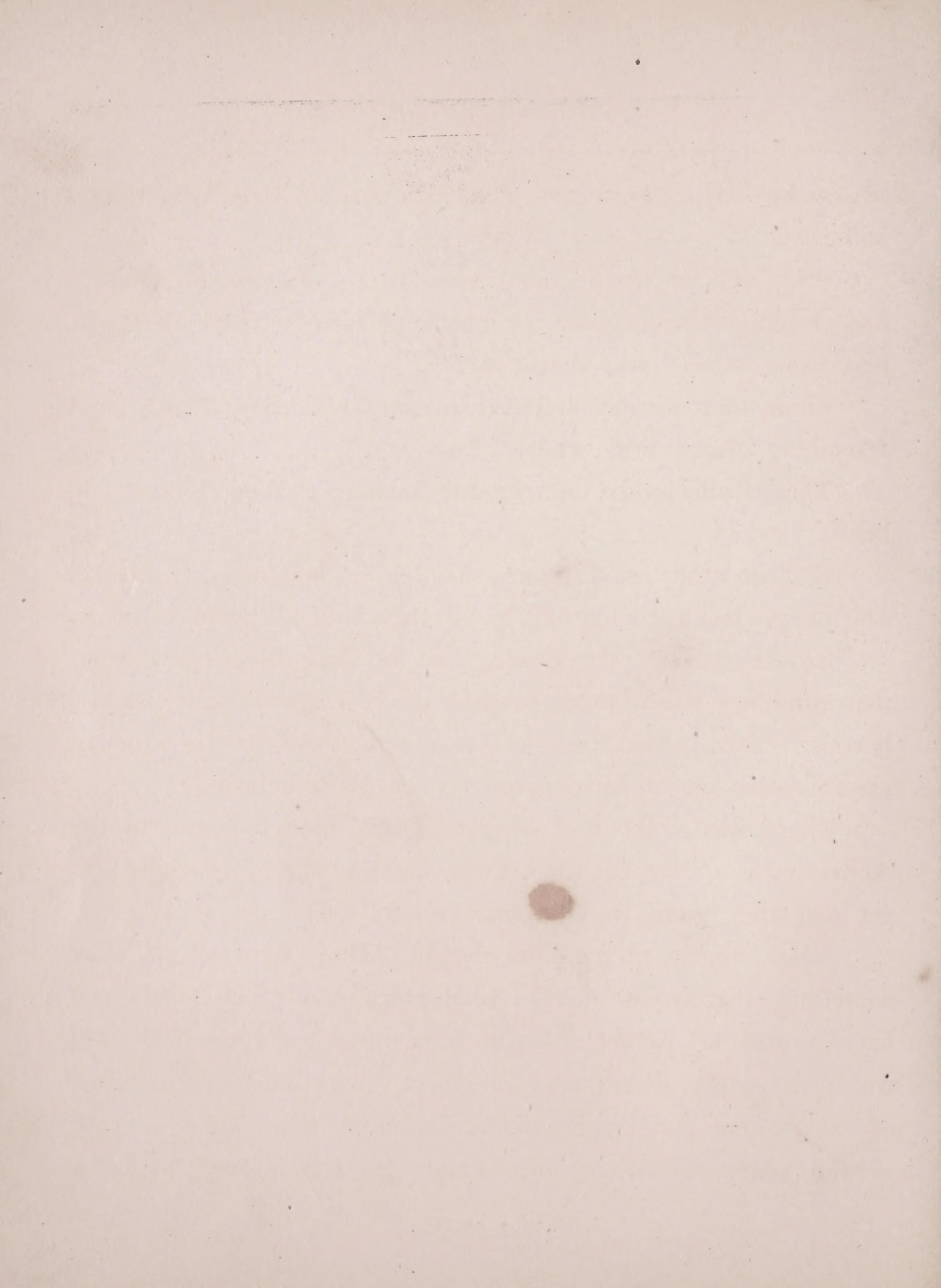
Then Ruth told her brother something that her mamma had read to her from one of Mrs. Maxwell's letters. She said that Eva had been much with one or two schoolmates, who were very vain, foolish girls, and her mother had been very sorry to see their influence over her. She hoped that her visit at the Doctor's would help to change her back again to the Eva





A QUIET TALK.







of earlier days; or, rather, lead her on to something better still.

"So, let's try not to mind when she is disagreeable, Jimmy; and, besides, she is ever so much pleasanter than when she first came; don't you think so?"

Jimmy did not say much in answer; and they talked about something else a little while.

Then Ruth picked up her hat, saying: "Well, I must run home."

"I'll go, too," said Jimmy, hauling in his line. "I believe I'm pretty much cooled off." So they walked home together.

At dinner time, the Doctor said he had driven past a lot that morning, where there seemed to be a good many huckleberries. "Now," said he, "as I can spare two or three hours, possibly, this afternoon, suppose we all go a berrying?"

There was a shout of delight at this, though it *was* at the dinner table. Mamma, and even Cousin Maria, concluded to go, and they were to take little Jessie, too.

After dinner, preparations began. They were all to wear something that would not be easily torn; and they must each have a pail or basket to pick into, besides larger pails into which to empty these; and of course there was a great deal of extra hurry, and bustle, and fun, when so many children were getting ready for a real nice time. So this proved to be a



capital chance for Eva and Jimmy to forget their hard words and angry feelings; and I am happy to say they both seemed glad to do so.

If the children made a great time getting ready, they all thought Mamma and Cousin Maria did, too. They went right from the dinner table to begin; and, after all, when Bob with the buggy, and Charley with the wagon, were standing before the door, these two ladies had to be called and called.

The drive to the berry lot was over a rough road, but that made more fun for the children, who jumped and groaned, all together, at every bump.

The Doctor was right about the berries. There were "lots and lots" of them, as Paul declared; though Arthur corrected him, saying, "They were all in one lot."

The children worked with a will, for they all liked berries and milk, and huckleberry pudding. Besides, Cousin Maria had promised to make some huckleberry cake, such as she used to like very much when she was a little girl; and the young ones thought that would surely need a good pailful.

The little ones—Allan and Marie and Jessie—tumbled around over the rocks, upsetting a pail or basket now and then, but enjoying it all greatly.

By and by came a surprise. Papa declared it was time to stop work and have some tea. And then from the wagon were



produced two baskets, that showed what the ladies had been about when they were so long getting ready.

There were plenty of goodies for a nice picnic supper, and all the little workers were hungry enough to enjoy it, I can assure you. It was the first time little Marion had ever seen a table-cloth spread on the grass, and she thought it the funniest arrangement possible.

"I must write anoder letter to my mamma, and tell her all about it!" she said. And so she did, the very next morning.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### HOME SCENES.

**T**HE children were all down by the gate one afternoon, just before tea, with their papa. They were looking at some flowers on one of Cousin Maria's choice shrubs, and talking—all at once—about everything which had happened that day, as they generally did, when they had possession of Papa for a while.

Suddenly they heard a scream, and Nannie Grey and another little girl flung open the gate and rushed in.

Nan and Billy had chased them, and now they stood outside the gate, quite ready for some more fun.



"Afraid of the goats?" said the Doctor, kindly. "Well, they are sad rogues. They only mean play, but their play is too rough for little girls, isn't it?"

"Why, papa, they never chase us, or *bunt* us!" said Paul.

"No, I suppose not; they know you, and you feed them often. Mark!" the Doctor called. And when Mark left his work and came up, he said: "You must punish the goats by shutting them up; and I think we must contrive a yard for them, so that they cannot run in the street. They frighten children."

Mark smiled as he led away the naughty goats, and Paul said again, "They wouldn't hurt you a bit!"

"I remember being frightened by a goat, when I was a little boy," said the Doctor; "and I was not alone."

"Tell us about it, papa!"

"There was a goat kept by a family about a mile from the school-house—that same school-house which was so near the lions, you know—and one day the creature chased all the school children, some twenty of us, in a body. None of us dared to turn and face him, and we ran with all our might for the school-house, and flung open the door pretty much as Nannie did our gate just now.

"The teacher heard the noise and opened the inner door; and there were all his scholars huddled together in the little



entry-room, while the old goat stood with his fore-feet planted on the threshold, and his head bent forward as who should say: 'Come on! let's try it again!'

"The teacher said: 'Why, children! Afraid of a goat? He only wants to play with you; come here, Andrew, and pat him.'

"So Andrew sidled up close to the teacher, and ventured to pat the goat; but for all this show of bravery we did not want to try the race again!"

The children all laughed, and the two little girls seemed to enjoy the story very much. It was quite comforting to them to think that tall Dr. Brooks was once afraid of a goat too.

Then Nannie looked over the fence anxiously.

"They are all safe now; Mark has taken them away," said the Doctor; "do you want to go?"

"Yes sir, please; mother told me to hurry. Thank you, ever so much, sir!" said Nannie, as he opened the gate.

"Children, bring Baby in now!" Mamma called from the house.

"Baby! Why she is not here; run and tell Mamma so, Paul," said the Doctor; for he was going on to look over the garden.

Presently Mamma and two or three others came hurrying



out of the house, all in search of Miss Baby. Mrs. Brooks had just been to see a sick neighbor, and looking around for Jessie as soon as she came into the house, found her missing.

Of course Papa and all the children joined in the search, crying: "Jessie Baby! Where's Jessie!"

Mamma had reached the old overgrown arbor at the end of the garden, when she heard a little voice answer: "Peep-bo!" and looking in, there was the little runaway, busily picking off leaves from a vine. "Peep-bo, mamma!" she said again, roguishly; and as you will believe, she was caught up for a kiss.

The children all exclaimed when told where Baby was found: "How could the little puss get so far away without being seen!"

"We shall have to watch her, if she takes a fancy to run away," said Jimmy, wisely.

"I suspect," said Mamma, giving her another kiss, "she missed me, or saw me go out, and thought she would follow; I have never known her to go off by herself before."

As for Baby, she took all the lectures which the children gave her, on the naughtiness of running away, with a pleased smile, patting her mother's cheek, and saying: "*Here's* mamma!"

The tea bell rang as the whole family were gathered





THE RUNAWAY.







around the Baby, which was convenient, for they had only to march in together.

"Mamma," said Jimmy, "do you know what a *great* while it is since we went to Carfield? Ages, I think!"

"Oh, I wish we could go to Grandpa Deane's pretty soon!" chimed in one or two others.

Eva set down her cup with a look of eager interest.

"You would like to see the old place, would you, Eva?" said her auntie, kindly.

"Oh yes, indeed, Aunt Agatha, I want to go *ever* so much!"

"I wonder," said the Doctor, "if any little birds were listening outside our window this morning, Mamma?"

"Oh, then Papa and Mamma have been talking about it; now we shall go, surely!"

"Then the birds did not tell you *all* we said?" asked the Doctor, quizzically.

"Papa, how you tease them! All there is to be told, little folks, is this: I wrote to Grandma to-day that we should try to go up some day this week,—or at least two wagon loads of us."

There was a general clapping of hands at this—Allan's little hands excepted; he was busy at that moment putting a row of crusts under the edge of his plate.



"Allan, what is the matter with the crusts? Eat them, my boy; you mustn't waste good bread!"

"We've got chickens, papa!" was the little boy's answer.

"And you mean to make them eat the hard parts, eh?" said the Doctor, laughing. "That is hardly fair. But come, as you have such a row of them, you may eat half, and the chickens may eat the rest." So Allan divided the crusts into two piles, very carefully, and ate his own part, saving the rest to give the chickens after tea.

"Kate loved to talk about Carfield, and about Grandma Deane, and all," said Eva to her auntie, after tea.

It was the first time Eva had spoken of her sister, except in answer to some question. Mrs. Brooks kissed her, and answered:

"You and Katie were two happy little girls while you were there, and we all loved you dearly."

Eva sat still for a few moments; then she said, with a sigh: "I don't believe you can love me so well *now*, Aunt Agatha! I wish I could be good, like Ruth."

"I *do* love you, my child; and you *can* try, as I hope Ruthie is trying, to overcome your faults."

"*Katie* tried," said Eva. "She used to pray every day; and she loved to go to church so much!"



"Katie tried in the right way then, darling; for none of us can be good without heavenly help."

Eva opened a locket, which she wore with a little gold chain. "Did I show you this picture of Kate, auntie?" she asked. "I think it is the best we have of her. Mamma wears one just like it."

As Mrs. Brooks was bending over the locket, Jimmy looked into the room. He went away directly, and found Ruth in the parlor.

"Ruth," he whispered, "I guess Eva *will* come out all right. She's talking to Mamma just as you would!"

Jimmy thought no one could have "a good talk with Mamma" without feeling better for it.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### RAINY DAYS.

**T**HE next day it rained; and the next. At least it did not clear off until late in the day.

These were rather trying days for the children. Papa had not said which day they were to go to Carfield, because, as he explained to them, he could not know, a day beforehand, whether the arrangements could be made.



But they went to bed, hoping that the delightful plan would be carried out the next day; and then to wake up twice and find the rain falling, was quite a trial, as you will understand, dear little readers!

The children bore it very well, all things considered. On the whole, these two days proved to be very happy ones; for when they found that there could be no out-door sports, they all vied with each other in contriving "nice things to do" in the house.

Once, when they were all gathered in the hall, looking out at the rain rather disconsolately, the Doctor came out of his office, and stood and looked at them for a moment.

Then he suddenly exclaimed: "Catch me who can!" and went up the stairs two or three steps at a time.

Such a whoop and hurrah as rang through the hall at this bidding! The children scrambled up the stairs,—girls and boys,—the older ones first, and the little ones, down to Allan, pattering after. Baby Jessie alone stood still, looking after them in astonishment. Then she turned to her mamma, saying: "Where gone?"

"We can hear where they have gone, I think!" Mamma said, laughing, as the doors slammed above.

In at one door, and out at another, went the Doctor, jumping over the little ones, when they tried to grasp him, and



finally disappearing up the garret stairs. Here the game lasted a few minutes longer, for there was a good many things to dodge around; but "the hounds" were too many for the Doctor, and he was caught at last.

"Do you remember, papa," said Ruth, "how long you used to keep us chasing you when we were little, in the old house in Carfield?"

"Oh, I remember that garret!" cried Jimmy. "There was a part over the kitchen that was lower, and there was a doorway, and a deep step, or jumping place, to get down into it."

"Yes, and Papa would go down there with a jump, and while we were letting ourselves down carefully, he would run down the back stairs and come around up the front way, and laugh at us, just as we got down. But we thought it was great fun!"

The children led their captive down in triumph.

"Well, Papa, have you found out a medicine to make people grow young?" Mamma asked.

"Not exactly, my dear; I was only administering a medicine to stir up these dull looking children!"

Laura, Paul, and Marion were looking at picture books together.

"Oh," said Paul, "here's a woman that looks just like Mark's mother; she's got just such a cap!"



"Because that is a widow's cap; Mrs. Finley is a widow, too," said Mamma.

"Mrs. Finley has her good boy, Mark, to help take care of her," observed Laura; "I wonder if *this* widow had such a good son?"

"She had a good daughter; if you will read the story you will see that her little daughter was a great comfort to her."

"Oh, mamma, please read it aloud to us! It is not very long."

So Mamma took the book, and read:

#### NELLY'S INVITATION.

"Such a glorious time as we shall have, every single day! I know we shall, for we went to this same place last year. Oh, Nelly, *don't* you wish you were going too?"

The young speaker finished with a caper around and among the open trunks which her mother was busily packing, and came near falling over a pile of nice light dresses.

"There, Josie, now be quiet, or you will not be able to get ready, after all; and don't tease your little friend—that is not kind."

Josie glanced at Nelly, and seeing her sorrowful look, she gave her a kiss and a hug, saying:



"I didn't mean to tease you, Nelly, I'm sure! But I do wish you were going somewhere, out of this 'stifling city air'!"

This phrase Josie had heard from the lips of some of her elders; she did not look as if she were stifled, or suffering in any way.

"I wish so, too!" said Nelly; "we went to the sea-shore last Summer; but I don't suppose we shall go anywhere now."

Josie sympathized with her little friend; but in the joyous bustle of preparation for the morrow's journey, she could not stay sorry long.

Nelly watched her a little longer, trying to answer her lively talk, but it was hard work; so she soon kissed Josie and her sister "good-by" for the rest of the Summer, and went home.

Nelly went directly to her mother's room, and was about to pour out her griefs at once, but was arrested by the sight of a toy horse upon the floor.

"Who has been here, mother? Is that Willy Evers's horse?"

"Yes; Mrs. Evers came in on an errand, and she said I looked so lonesome that she would bring Willy, and sit with me an hour. Where has my little nurse been so long?"



"I stopped in to see Josie and Fan, and say 'good-by'; but it was so nice to see them packing, I stayed to watch them.

"Oh, mother, they are going to have such a nice time! *Can't* we go into the country just a *little* while, mother? It's so *stifling* here? It is, *really*, mother! Josie says so, and you don't know, because you're sick, and have that big shawl on your chair, if it is ever so hot."

"Well, darling, we must make the best of it; we cannot go away this year, and we must try to be contented and happy at home."

"Oh, dear! I think it is too bad, any way. All the girls are going, *every one* that I know; and I do want to go so much."

And Nelly looked sullen and unhappy, as might be supposed, with so much discontent in her heart.

The sick mother, with her pale face and close widow's cap, watched her in silence a few moments. Then she said gently, "Nelly, dear, you know why it is that we are poor, and cannot afford things that we used to have; did we not make up our minds, you and I, that we would both try to say, 'Thy will be done'?"

Nelly raised her eyes, and meeting her mother's glance, she sprang up on her lap, and threw both arms around her





THE WIDOW.







neck. Big girl as she began to think herself, she was not too large to claim her old place sometimes!

"I know, mother! I did mean to; but it is so hard to have no dear father to take care of us; sometimes I can't feel it in my heart, if I *do* say it!"

"We must keep on trying, darling; and God will help us to feel right.

"I know it will be very dull for you, with your little friends all gone, and your mother unable to go out with you; but you must see how many bright and pleasant things you can find to be thankful for. Our heavenly Father has left us very many comforts, darling; He is very good to us still!"

"Mother, I am ashamed to think how cross I was! I haven't been your 'sunbeam' to-day, have I? But the sun is coming out now!"

And Nelly kissed her mother on both cheeks, and then got down, and set herself about tidying up the room, with a very brisk and cheerful air.

"I guess I'd better take Willy's horse in to him; he will cry if he misses it."

And away she ran to do this errand.

Mrs. Evers began to talk to Nelly about her mother. She was a kind-hearted woman, but thoughtless, or she would not have spoken so to a child as young as Nelly.



"I declare, Nelly Warner," said she, "I was real frightened when I saw your mother to-day; seems to me she looks very poorly. Pity she hadn't some one to nurse her up, and take care of her. I couldn't help thinking she was going right after your father!

"But don't you tell her I said so, child!" she added suddenly, noticing Nelly's startled look. "You mustn't ever say anything to worry her, but keep her cheerful; do you see?"

She tried to "see," but her eyes were filling with tears.

Nelly wiped them away as she ran home; but her poor little heart was full with this new fear, and with self-reproach to think how she had "worried" her mother that very afternoon.

She tried her best to be a help and comfort to her for the rest of the day.

The next morning Nelly heard a ring at the door-bell; and who should come bounding in but Josie and Fanny Spaulding.

"Why, why, girls! I thought you were going to-day!"

"So we were; but Papa can't leave until to-morrow! And we're not sorry a bit; we're glad of it; for only think, Nelly, Mamma wants to take you with us!"

"Yes!" cried Josie, jumping up and down; "she's coming around to see your mother, and ask her; but we ran on first. There she is!"



They ran to open the door, and before Nelly could think what had happened, the whole group were in Mrs. Warner's room, and Mrs. Spaulding was kindly urging her plan.

"Let Nelly go with us; the country air will do her a world of good; and I will take good care of her. I know you will miss her very much, but she will come back such a great strong girl, that she will be a real help to you. Besides, my husband will come out to us every Saturday, returning the first of the week, and if you should feel worse, and want her, we can send her home to you."

The good lady seemed to think she had it all fixed beautifully; and Josie and Fan whispered to Nelly,—

"Wont it be splendid? *we* coaxed Mamma to do it! Wont we have grand times together?"

"You are very kind indeed; I am very grateful to you for your thought for my child," said Mrs. Warner. "Nelly, dear, have you heard? What do you say?"

Nelly went up to her mother's chair, and looked up quietly at Mrs. Spaulding.

"I should like to go into the country ever so much, ma'am; but I mustn't leave my mother!"

"But, my dear, if your mother is willing to spare you, you can go!"

"No, ma'am, thank you; mother wouldn't have any one



but Bridget in the house if I went away; and Bridget can't *love* her as I do!"

The child seemed to have made up her mind so firmly that there was no more to be said.

Josie and Fan exclaimed, "Oh, Nell Warner!" in a tone of intense disappointment; but the sick mother felt relieved and thankful.

If Nelly had been delighted with the plan, and anxious to go, she would not have had the heart to refuse her.

But she had had time to realize, in those few moments, how sadly she would miss her; and how anxious she would feel, were her only treasure absent in the care of comparative strangers.

"Well, little Nelly," said Mrs. Spaulding, "we are sorry not to take you with us; but you are a good girl to love your mother so much; and I am *sure* you will have a happy Summer at home!"

Mrs. Spaulding was quite right in this. Nelly found plenty to do, and plenty of amusement, when she had made up her mind to be contented.

And, after a week or two, her dear mother began to grow much better, in spite of Mrs. Evers's doleful predictions.

Soon she was able to go out a little; and then, in a few days more, she and Nelly took a long ride out to the



Park, in a car. They took a lunch with them, and spent several hours there; and Nelly was quite sure she could not have enjoyed a day more, even in the most delightful of country places.

The story pleased all the children; but Eva, who was listening, seemed to understand it better than the rest.

"I know just how Nelly must have felt," said she, "when she saw all the girls she knew going off into the country. I thought I should have to stay at home when Papa was taken sick, and you don't know how dismal it seemed to think of it, for there wasn't a girl I knew left in town!"

Jimmy glanced slyly at Ruth. He was thinking that Eva might have had to stay, if their mother had not been willing to take care of her and Marion.

Eva saw the look, and blushed. In a moment she added: "I may thank *you* for my treat, Aunt Agatha; it was so good of you to let us come without Mamma!"

This time Ruth looked at Jimmy, and it was his turn to blush.



## CHAPTER XVII.

## A DAY AT CARFIELD.

**T**OM SMITH came to the door on an errand one day, and as he stood talking to the Doctor he had much ado to keep back his dog Fox, who was determined to come into the hall with him.

"Never mind, let the dog come in, Tom!" said the Doctor, as he turned away to fetch something from his office.

Laura was in the sitting-room close by, and she came to the door on hearing the word "dog."

"I was afraid he might scare you," said Tom; "little ladies don't always like dogs, I believe!"

"Oh, I'm not afraid of a good-natured dog like yours; what's his name? Fox? Here Fox! come, old fellow!"

Fox did come with a will, bounding into the room, and up on a chair, where he sat as if quite at home.

Laura's doll sat on the edge of the same chair. Laura had just been dressing her up in her best to please little Marie. Laura did not care much for a doll herself; she preferred live pets.

"You may play Adelia was your child, Marie, and I'll have Tab for mine!" she had just said to Marion, when Fox came upon the scene.





A VISIT FROM FOX.







Miss Adelia did not seem at all disturbed, although Fox sprang up behind her, and it was quite a wonder he did not knock her off.

But Tab was decidedly put out by the visit. She growled and put up her back, and did not feel satisfied even when Laura cuddled her up in her arms; she still kept one eye upon the saucy intruder.

"Oh, Tab! can't you be more civil? I'm ashamed of you!" said Laura.

Tom was soon ready to go, and called Fox; but he had to wait to let Paul and Allan admire him and pat him, as he went out.

"I wish *we* had a dog!" said Paul. "Why don't Papa get a nice dog, like Fox, Jimmy?"

"I don't know; we've never had a dog since Rover, have we, Ruth?"

"No; we couldn't find another dog so clever as Rover."

"But I *would* like to have a dog; let's ask Papa to let us get one!"

This was not long after breakfast; just then the Doctor came through the hall, but all thought of dogs took flight at the first words he spoke.

"I think," he said to his wife, "this day is too pleasant to be lost; you had better get ready for the trip to Carfield."



The Doctor could not go, for he had sick people to attend to; and Bob must go with his master. But the plan was to hire a horse and wagon of a neighbor, which Mark was to drive, and Jimmy could drive Charley with their own wagon. In this way all could go.

"At last, at last we're going!" shouted the little ones, jumping around like crazy creatures.

Very soon they were all made ready, and very soon after the two wagons drove up for their loads.

Cousin Maria went in Mark's wagon, with some of the children; and Mamma was with the rest, under Jimmy's care,—at least so he seemed to think.

I need not describe the drive to Carfield, as our little readers have been over the same road with these children before. As many times as they had been over it they enjoyed every rod of the way quite as much as if it had been all new to them. Perhaps more, for they knew just when they were coming to this house, or that queer old tree; or to the turn in the road where there was a glimpse of the lake; and so on,—and this kept them on the watch.

It was not a surprise party this time, for Grandpa and Grandma had "made sure this pleasant day would fetch them," as they said.

But it was a merry party, as ever you saw. Little Jessie



was as happy as any bird, and Grandpa seemed fully as pleased as she, when he had his pet in his arms once more.

But the pleasantest thing about the visit was Eva's enjoyment of it. Being with Grandma Deane and Grandpa and Uncle Horace, seemed to bring back the dear, loving little Eva of the old days. She went from one room to another, and out to the barn, and the "barn chamber," which was the dear old school-room, and all over the garden and yards, talking eagerly with Ruth and Jimmy about what they used to do, and how they used to play in recess.

Eva spoke of her sister Kate several times, too, which pleased Ruth, for she had not spoken of Kate to any one except her auntie before, since she came to them.

When they had been all over the place, and Eva had seen little Frisk's grave, the children all sat resting and waiting for dinner, which Grandma said would be ready very soon. Suddenly Eva started up and whispered to Grandma Deane. She asked if she might run up into the garret a few moments.

Dinner was ready before Eva came down, and Ruth was sent to call her.

She found her on her knees, before an old box, which she had drawn out from under the eaves.

Eva looked around when Ruth came towards her, and smiled, though her eyes were full of tears.



"See, Ruth," she said, "here are some paper dolls that Katie and I made. She made most all of them; and the dresses. We used to keep them in this box, and come up here and play with them sometimes. I don't suppose any one has noticed the box, for it was here, pushed back under this beam, just where we left it!"

Ruth bent over the box, and looked at the little paper toys with such deep interest that she forgot her errand for some moments.

When she remembered, and they turned to go down, Eva said: "I want Arthur to come up and see them. He will understand; but please don't tell the rest!"

So, after dinner, when Eva and Arthur were missing for a little while, Ruth kept the others from going to search for them.

That afternoon several of the Carfield children, who used to be Mrs. Brooks's scholars when she was "Miss Agatha," came down to see their old teacher, and Ruth and Jimmy, and Eva, too, whom they all remembered very well.

While these older ones were asking each other questions and talking about the old school-days, Uncle Horace took the little boys, and Laura and Marion, out into the work-shop. They had been there before, but he had something to show them, he said.



He took down from a high shelf a nice little wheel-barrow, which he had been making for Paul and Allan to wheel off weeds from their gardens.

And for the little girls he had made a doll's bedstead, wide enough for two dolls to sleep side by side.

The children were very much pleased with these gifts, and they thought Uncle Horace was very kind to make them, and have them all ready when they came.

Altogether this was a very happy day, and the children felt, as they rode home, that they had enough to talk about to last them a week at least.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE BIRD'S LESSON.

**T**HE little wheel-barrow and the doll's bedstead were very carefully packed under the wagon seat, when the party started for home. The children were too sleepy and tired to care to take them out when they reached home; but the next morning, directly after breakfast, there was a rush for the shed, to get out the new playthings.

Laura carried the bedstead up into the nursery, and her



auntie found a cradle pillow that would just fit it for a bed. Laura had some sheets and little pillows that had belonged to a bedstead which was broken; so she soon had the bed made up nicely, and little Marion set about getting the dolls to sleep at once. Baby Jessie took the idea, and came lugging along Paul's old Lucinda, to put on the bed, saying, "Bye-bye, baby!"

Laura watched them a few minutes, and then she left Marie and Baby to enjoy the play, and ran down to join the others.

Paul was trying the new wheel-barrow. It trundled along beautifully,—just like Mark's big one.

"Oh, come!" cried Laura, "let's go out now and weed our gardens, and then carry away all the weeds and sticks and litter in the wheel-barrow."

Away they ran; and such a thorough weeding as the garden beds had that morning must have surprised the flowers, for they had been quite neglected for a few days.

Allan pulled up something besides weeds probably, in his zeal; but then his garden was used to pretty hard treatment. As soon as he found a handful of weeds he would run and fling them into the wheel-barrow, and trundle them away.

This was great fun for Allan, but the trouble was that Paul and Laura each had a load waiting, and Allan could





TAKING TURNS.







not spare the barrow. The wheel-barrow was too new a play-thing to be given up in this way, and so there was a quarrel. Allan would have been delighted to wheel off weeds for the others; this was what Mark proposed—he was at work near by. “He can’t weed his garden properly, you know; let him do the wheeling, and you keep on weeding,” said Mark.

But Laura and Paul wanted the fun of wheeling off their own loads; so at last they all ran in half crying, to tell Mamma. Allan was loudly crying, for Paul had ended by snatching away the barrow.

Mamma heard both sides of the story. Then she set Jessie down from her lap, and took down a picture book.

“Come and look at this picture, Allan,” she said.

It was a mother bird feeding her young.

“What they doing, mamma?” said Allan.

“The little birds are waiting to be fed. See; the mother bird can only bring one bit at a time, so she feeds the five little birds in turn.

“That little fellow who has his mouth open knows it is his turn now; the mother bird is giving him the worm.

“Now look at the other little birds, darling; do they open their mouths too, and try to pull away the worm from their brother?”



Allan looked very carefully, and then shook his head: "Their moufs are all shut tight!" said he.

"They are good little birds to wait for their turn," said Mamma. "Now if Allan wants to be a good little boy, he will wait for his turn with the wheel-barrow, and not be selfish."

Jimmy was standing by and he looked rather roguish. "What is it, Jimmy?" said his mamma.

"Why," said he, "all the little birds I ever saw would open their mouths—every one of 'em—whenever the mother bird came near. And if *I* went near that robin's nest in the old cherry tree, when the old robin was gone, the little things would all open their beaks!"

Mamma laughed. "I thought they would, too," said she, "but they don't in this picture."

"But it would not matter if the birdies *did* all open their beaks; would it, Allan? if they were content to wait when they found it was not their turn. The hymn says:

"Birds in their little nests agree,  
And 'tis a shameful sight,  
If children of one family  
Fall out, and strive, and fight."

"You mustn't fight, little birdies," said Allan, still looking at the picture; "wait for your turn!"

"And little boys too," said Mamma, as she put down the



book. "Now go and play, and *all* try to be obliging and kind."

Laura and Paul knew that she thought they needed the advice too.

They went back to their gardens, and Allan stood still with his hands behind him while Paul and Laura each wheeled off a load.

Then Laura said: "Now you may wheel away weeds for me, Allan, when I've pulled up some more." So first Allan and then Paul had a turn, and they got on nicely after that.

Laura knew that this was but fair, for the wheel-barrow was meant for the two little boys.

Mark or Jimmy generally went for the mail just after dinner. On this day the letters were brought in before the family arose from the table.

"One for me, Uncle Doctor!" said Arthur, holding out his hand.

"And one for me, I hope!" said Eva.

"Eva has one," said the Doctor, "but there is none for our little boy to-day."

"Oh!" said Arthur; and he looked very much disappointed.

"What made you think you would have a letter to-day?" asked Eva, as she opened her own.



"Papa always writes once a week, and I get his letter on Friday, every week," said he.

"Well," said the Doctor cheerily, "we will not believe that he has forgotten you, will we, Arthur?"

"Oh no, sir; I'm sure he didn't forget!"

"Then, my boy, you know he had some very good reason for not writing; so wait patiently, and you will soon know what it means."

Arthur smiled and said no more about his letter. Only once, that afternoon, he said to Cousin Maria: "I *hope* my papa is not sick!"

That evening some of the children were allowed to sit up a little longer than usual. Little Allan and Marion and Paul had been abed for some time, and still nothing was said about bedtime to the next set.

Arthur was beginning to look tired, when the sound of wheels was heard outside.

"There's Pa," said Jimmy; "why, I supposed he had gone away off somewhere. And what has he driven up to the door for?"

The question was soon answered, for the Doctor came in, and with him a tall gentleman, into whose arms Arthur sprang, joyfully exclaiming, "Oh, papa!"

"Did you go to the depot, papa?" said Jimmy. "How did you know that Mr. Manning was coming?"



"I had a letter this noon," said the Doctor, "but I did not tell Arthur its contents, lest his father should not be able to come, as he wrote that he might be prevented.

"Our little boy has been learning faith and patience this afternoon," he added, to Mr. Manning.

The father looked down at the pale, quiet little face, so happy now; and then he glanced up at the Doctor again, as if he thought the dear little fellow had learned many such lessons, and might have more in store for him.

Mr. Manning stayed until Monday. Of course he came to see Arthur chiefly, but he was very kind indeed to all the children, and seemed to like to see them all together.

Every one was sorry when Monday morning came, and their friend was obliged to leave them. But the children knew that Arthur must feel more sorry than any one, and they were all especially kind to him that day.



## CHAPTER XIX.

## A WONDERFUL BOX.

**A**RTHUR received a letter sooner than he expected after his father went away.

The letter told him to ask the Doctor to send to the Express office that evening.

"I wanted to bring something for my little son and his dear playmates," Mr. Manning wrote; "but I was obliged to leave town in a hurry, so I thought I would wait until I had seen you all, and then I could tell better what would please you."

Arthur showed the letter to all the children, and they rejoiced together over the good news.

"May we sit up until the train is in this evening?" Laura asked; and she seemed to have spoken for all the children, for they all waited eagerly for the answer.

"It would be very late," Mamma said, "before we could get the box from the office. Perhaps it could not be obtained before morning. I would rather all my little folks would go to bed as usual; and in the morning Arthur and all will feel bright and fresh to enjoy opening the box."

"That will be better, Mamma Brooks!" said Arthur. And the rest thought they ought to be willing to wait, if he was.



The box was brought from the office early in the morning; and directly after breakfast, the children gathered around to see Arthur open it. There was something besides the box; and that was a basket of fine peaches for Mrs. Brooks.

Arthur tried to start the nails, but his hands were too weak. "You open it, please, Jimmy!" said he, handing over the hatchet.

The lid did not remain on very long after Jimmy went to work; but when it was off, he stood back to let Arthur unpack the things.

There was something for each of the children. First came out a toy for Allan,—two horses and a stable to put them in. Then there was a bracket saw for Jimmy, with patterns and directions, with which he was perfectly delighted, for he was fond of using tools. The next thing unpacked was a nice book for Ruth, and another for Eva. Then came a nice paint box for Laura, "just exactly what she wanted," she said; and a large box full of animals, fences, and so on, for Paul,—a farm yard, Jimmy called it. For little Marion, there was a new doll's tea-set; and for Baby Jessie, a big curly dog on wheels.

For Arthur himself, there was a complete little steam engine; a game of some sort, played with picture cards, and a nice new knife.

At the bottom of the box was found a package of nice candies.



Papa and Mamma, Cousin Maria, Mark, and Nancy were called to see the contents of the wonderful box. Most of the children ran to the kitchen to show their gifts to Ellen also, as they could not persuade her to come and see them.

"I think your father is splendid!" exclaimed Paul, hugging his box of toys.

"And so thoughtful!" said Jimmy; "don't you see he has sent things for all of us that we can enjoy together. You can learn to use my bracket saw, you know, Arthur!"

"And we can all paint pictures, if we get some more brushes!" said Laura.

"And you can all read my book!" added Ruth.

"And mine," said Eva. "I think Mr. Manning was real kind to send something for Marie and me,—we don't belong here!"

"Yes, you do *now*; and Arthur loves you dearly!" Ruth whispered.

"As for Jessie, I suppose she would let us all play with her dog or anything else, if Paul will only let her have his Lucinda!" said Jimmy, laughing.

All turned to look at the little darling. She had placed her pretty dog safely on a chair, and now sat on the floor, tending the forlorn old Lucinda, and watching the other children with a pleased look.





JESSIE AND LUCINDA.







"Why don't you put down old dolly, and play with your nice doggie, Jessie?" said Allan.

"Nice doggie,—nice doddy, too!" said Jessie, patting the old doll in a loving way. "Doddy" was her word for a doll.

Such a busy set of children as the house contained that day! Mark was called upon continually for help and advice. First Jimmy begged his help in setting up a place for his saw; all the boys were gathered around to watch this proceeding, including two young neighbors who were playmates of Jimmy's sometimes. When all was ready Jimmy sawed out a piece of wood in the shape of a heart from the lid of a cigar box, and as he held it up there was a shout of admiration from the group.

"Now will you help me set my steam-engine a going?" asked Arthur.

"Yes, of course I will; I'd have done that first, if you had asked me," Jimmy answered.

This proved quite an undertaking, and Mark was called in for consultation again before the little concern was fairly in working order, and the walking-beam began to move.

Then there was another shout of delight from the boys. "Just see how she goes!" they cried.

"Say, Arthur, I do believe we could rig up a little steam-



boat, with that for the engine, and make it turn the paddle-wheels, you know; wouldn't that be fun!"

"I guess it would! *Can* you make it, Jimmy?"

"I mean to try; that is, if you'd like it."

Now Jimmy had something to study over. It was three or four days before he completed his contrivance, and Mark helped him whenever he could spare the time.

The boat itself was soon made; and the paddle-wheels also. Jimmy built a little cabin on the boat, and painted it all nicely, with the name that Arthur chose in plain letters. The name was Eva.

The hardest thing was to adjust the paddle-wheels and connect them with the steam power so that the little engine could work them. The boys tried and tried again; they got it so that it would turn the paddles for a moment in the air, but when they put it on the tub of water it would not go. But Mark and Jimmy were very much interested by this time, and Arthur was very anxious to see his boat go; so they kept on trying to find out the trouble, and at last they succeeded.

"I do believe she'll go now, Mark; just see how freely the paddles work!" They spun around on their *knitting needle*, as Jimmy touched them, as if they meant work, sure enough.



"Well, we'll try her once more," said Mark.

So the lamp was freshly filled; the boiler replenished with hot water so it would start sooner; the little craft was carefully launched on the "sea," and the wick lighted, while a breathless group watched around.

In a moment or two steam was up. Puff, puff! The paddles yielded, and began to turn.

"Hurrah!" shouted the children; for they were all gathered around—boys and girls; Paul had summoned them all in haste. "She's going to have a real fair trial now!" he said.

A real fair trial proved to be all the boat wanted. The children could hardly believe their eyes as she paddled steadily across the tub, then turned, guided by Jimmy's stick, and recrossed. By that time the steam gave out.

"A regular little steamboat! Isn't it grand, Arthur?" exclaimed one and another.

Arthur thought it was. "I mean to write and tell Papa all about it," said he.

I doubt if Fulton himself felt much more proud as his boat puffed up the Hudson on its trial trip, than did our young machinists on this occasion. Mark had to leave them to work by themselves, and the boys made the Eva ready for another trip, and sent to invite the ladies out to see it.



It was a pretty sight really, and Mamma did not wonder at the children's shouts, as she saw the little concern steaming across the water.

"It is quite a contrivance, Jimmy; it does you credit," she said.

"Oh, I couldn't have made it work without Mark's help, mamma," he answered. "I knew how it ought to go; but it had to be fixed *so* nicely and carefully, I should have been discouraged long ago."

"It has taught you a lesson on perseverance then—a good lesson to remember, my dear boy!"

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## CHAPTER XX.

### COUSIN MARIA'S RING.

**T**HE vacation was passing rapidly away. The children had so much to do and so many plans on foot, that they could hardly think how they should spare time for lessons again. But when one of them said so before Mamma, she laughed and said:

"I think we must *make* time for lessons pretty soon; you must not play so hard as to be unfit for work!"

All the new plays and playthings, and the frequent rides





ROSALIE.







with old Charley, could not divert the children from the old delight—going by turns with Papa on his rounds.

No wonder; for the Doctor always made himself good company for his little people, talking to them as they drove along, and pointing out objects of interest.

It was Laura's turn one morning. When she came back she was eager to tell the others about a child she had seen while waiting for her Uncle during one of his calls.

"It was at that house out on the Fairview road—the large stone house; these people have just come to live there. Why, Ruth, you've seen them; you know Edith Morton,—this was her sister that I saw.

"Her name is Rosalie; I like that name! She was playing with such a dear little dog; just such a dog as we want,—or at least I do! She had one of those red balloons, you know, and was swinging it, and the dog was barking and jumping after it."

"How did you find out what her name was?" asked Ruth.

"Oh, she came to talk with me, when she saw me sitting there. She wanted me to get down and play with her; but I thought Uncle would be in a hurry when he came out, so I didn't.

"And she had such a beautiful locket!—why, it was



larger than Eva's; and then, when she put her hand up I saw she had two rings on, and one of them had a lovely stone!"

"Why, Lautie, you seem to have been quite bedazzled!" said Cousin Maria, laughing.

"But it is so nice to wear rings,—and she isn't any older than I am. Only think, Cousin Maria! I never had a ring in my life!"

"Well, my dear, your friends choose more sensible presents to give you, I think. Do you suppose Rosalie is happier with her dog and her rings than you are with your dear playmates and pleasant plays?"

"Why, no, ma'am; I don't suppose she is. I don't believe she can have such good times as we do! But I *should* like a ring though; I hope somebody will give me one when I have a birth-day, or anything!"

"Shall I tell you about the first ring I ever had?" asked Cousin Maria.

"Oh yes, if you please! Was it when you were a little girl?"

"Yes; just about your age. We lived quite in the country,—but a few miles from a large town.

"I used to play a good deal with some children who lived in the next house to us,—two little boys and their



sister. One day these children were taken to make a visit in the town of which I have spoken. They had some pennies to spend just as they pleased, and they each bought a ring.

"These rings were not real gold, and the stones which glittered in them were only colored glass. But I thought they were beautiful.

"When we played together the next day, these rings were before my eyes all the time, and I wished—oh, how I wished—that I were the happy wearer of such a ring!

"Now it happened that before these rings were broken or lost, my birthday came around. On that day my aunt sent me a present. It was contained in a tiny box, all done up in papers.

"I tore off the papers and saw the box. Then my heart beat *pit-a-pat*. I opened the box and saw some pink cotton. I lifted the first layer of cotton, and there lay a dear little chased gold ring!

"Laura can guess how delighted I was. I tried it on immediately. It was quite large for me, but I put it on my largest finger, and bent the finger to keep it on.

"My mother said: 'Maria, that ring is large for you. Better let me put it away for you, until you are a little older; then it will be more suitable.'

"But I could not bear to put it away. I said: 'Oh no,



mother, I'm sure it isn't too large; I can keep it on nicely. Besides, I guess Aunt wanted me to wear it!'

"Mother laughed, and called me a silly child. 'But you'll be sure to lose the ring in a day or two,' said she.

"I was determined the ring should not slip off and be lost. I wanted to run directly and show my real gold ring to the children over the way; but they were gone from home, so I had to be content with admiring it myself.

"I kept my knuckles bent most of the time; but once or twice I forgot, and opened my hand quickly, and down slipped the ring. I caught it each time, but I felt that would never do, so I began to bite the ring, to try to bend it, so it would stay on my finger.

"I kept on biting it. The next day was Sunday, and I pulled my glove off in church and looked at my ring, and then I bit it again.

"At last I had bitten it more than was necessary to make it stay on. I found I had bent it too much, and it hurt my finger. I could not get the ring off, and I could not bend it back into shape again. But my finger ached, and began to swell; so at last I was obliged to show it to my mother.

"'Why, child!' said she, 'what made you bite up that pretty ring? This is nice work, to be sure! I can't stir it. We must get father to file it off.'



“My father came and looked at my finger. Then he went after his file, while I sat in fear and trembling, for I did not know what dreadful operation might be found necessary.

“‘Lay your finger here on the table, Maria!’ said my father, when he came in. So I stretched out my finger, and shut my eyes, for I felt sick and faint.

“The filing did not hurt me, but my pretty gold ring lay in two or three bent-up fragments, on the table.

“‘Can’t it be mended?’ I asked, sorrowfully. My father shook his head. ‘It would cost more than it is worth to mend that, I think,’ said he.

“So I took the bits of gold and put them away in the tiny box with the pink cotton. My aunt’s pretty gift was destroyed, and all because I was such a vain little girl.”

The young people thanked good Cousin Maria for her story. “You never told us before about when you were a little girl,” said Laura. “I think this was real nice; please tell us more some day, Cousin Maria!”

But Laura said no more about a ring at that time. Indeed, I think she soon quite forgot her great wish in a good frolic with the other children.



## CHAPTER XXI.

## LITTLE HANDS IN MISCHIEF.

**T**HE next morning Jimmy came running in and asked: "Mamma, may Arthur and Laura and I go up to Jabez Dorr's shop? We want to consult him about some of our work. At least we boys do; and Laura wants to see his funny shop!"

"And the funny old man, too!" said Laura. "He is so odd, and he wears such queer clothes."

"You may go; but, Laura, you must not laugh at Mr. Dorr, or make fun of what he says or does. That would be rude, you know."

"I wont, Auntie. Wait, Jimmy, until I get my hat!"

"Bring my hat!" cried little Marion; "I want to go with Jimmy, too! Take *me*, Jimmy!"

"May she go, mamma?" Jimmy asked. "I'll take care of her."

Mamma consented, and Marie set out with the rest; only it was impossible for her to walk with the rest, for she was in such high spirits that she could not walk at all. She went with a hop, skip, and jump.

When they reached the shop, old Jabez, as people called





IN THE WORKSHOP.







him, was within, and the boys began at once to talk to him about their cabinet-making plans.

Jabez was not a cabinet-maker exactly, but he had handled a great many pieces of furniture in his way; he was a general tinker and mender of all sorts of articles; his glue-pot was always handy, and his shop was a real "curiosity shop" to children—there were so many odds and ends of all sorts lying about.

Laura was eagerly listening to the conversation about the bracket saw work, and all forgot little Marie for a few minutes.

She soon brought herself to mind by a loud cry.

"Hi, hi!" said old Jabez, "what's the little missy doing?"

Little missy, it proved, had been trying to manage some tools which lay on a bench within her reach, and had cut her finger, and then screamed at sight of the blood.

"There, there!" said the old man kindly, "don't cry; sit up here, and we'll bind it up directly."

He went to find a bit of rag; but when he took hold of Marion's hand she cried out pitifully, "Don't file it! Don't file my finger!"

"File it! What does she mean?" asked Jimmy. "Why, Marie, Mr. Dorr is only going to put some soft rag around the poor finger. See!"



"I know what she means," said Arthur. "She heard Cousin Maria telling about her ring yesterday."

Jimmy laughed when he heard the story.

"There!" said the old man, when he had done up the finger; "it's all right, but little missy mustn't touch the tools. Why, a little girl once got a sharp hook into her finger here, and I had to cut it out—only think!"

Marion stood with a very sober face, nursing the injured hand with the other, until the rest were ready to go home. As soon as she reached home, she ran to find her auntie, and tell her about the cut finger.

Mrs. Brooks was in the parlor with a lady. Marion did not appear to see the lady, she was so eager to tell about her trouble.

"Then the little hands were in mischief, and so they were taught a lesson," said her auntie. "Will they learn to let other people's things alone now, Marie?"

Marion looked at each of her hands, as if she were considering. Then she answered brightly, "I guess they will, auntie!"

"That's right!" said the lady. "Come and sit on my lap, little one, and I will tell you how a little niece of mine did some sad mischief one day. She did not mean to be naughty at all. It was all because the little hands had not learned that they mustn't touch things without asking."



“My sister had some choice plants in the window, that she was taking great care of. One was a rare kind of foliage plant, and it had just three large beautiful leaves on it.

“My sister watched this plant every day; she hoped there would be more leaves on it, for everybody said, ‘How beautiful that is!’

“Well, one morning when my sister came to look at her plants, the three beautiful leaves were gone—not broken, and drooping, but gone entirely.

“We did not know what to think of this; we could not imagine what had become of the leaves. But just then Florrie, my little niece, came in; she heard us wondering who could have picked off the leaves, and she spoke up at once: ‘Oh! why, auntie, *I* took those to wash the windows with!’

“Sure enough, the window panes, as high as her little arms would reach, were all smeared and stained with the color from the leaves; and we found the precious leaves themselves down under the window, all crumpled up. Wasn’t that a pity?”

“Yes, ma’am,” said Marion; “she was a naughty little girl, wasn’t she?”

“She was a very little girl then, dear; she knows better now. She has been at my house now for two weeks, and



she does not touch anything without leave. Will you come and see my little Florrie some day, if Auntie will bring you with her?"

Marion nodded, and kissed the lady; then she slipped down from her lap and ran to find Allan.

He was playing with his stable and horses, and Marion played with him. They named one horse "Bob," and the other "Charley"; but Allan said Charley was the "*goodest*."

They had Jessie's curly dog, too, standing by the stable; and an old sheep, and a cow which had lost her horns, and could not stand very well.

"Now we must give these *animums* something to eat!" said Marion; "they're so hungry."

"Well, I'll go ask Nellen for some dinner!" said Allan, and away he ran.

"Nellen, please, I want some dinner for my horses, and the dog, and cow, and all of 'em!"

Ellen laughed and brought him a cooky; but in the meantime Allan had spied what Ellen was doing—she was stoning raisins.

"Oh, I guess I want some of those!" said he.

"Nonsense! Horses don't eat raisins," said Ellen; "run along now, I don't believe your mamma would let you eat any."

Allan was old enough to remember that the last time he



asked for raisins his mamma said "No, they were not good for him." But the little boy did not want to remember. He kept on begging for some, and at last Ellen put a few in a little quirl of paper, saying: "There, run and ask Mamma if you may have those!"

Allan went slowly out of the kitchen, and into the room where Marion was waiting for him. By that time he had concluded that it was not worth while to ask Mamma.

"Have you got something?" Marie asked; and Allan held out the cooky, but kept the other hand behind him.

"What else?" said she, grasping the hand with the twist of paper. "Oh, raisins! Let's give the cooky to the horses and play it was hay, and we have these for our dinner!"

Marion ran for her tea-set, and set it out on a chair, and Allan filled two plates with the raisins.

Just then Mamma came in, for the lady was gone. "Why, Allan, where did you get these?" she said.

Allan hung his head and looked ashamed.

"Did you ask Ellen for them, Allan?"

"Yes, but they're on'y 'ittle ones, mamma!" said Allan. Then his conscience troubled him. He had not told the whole story. So he looked up in his mamma's face and added: "Nellen said, 'Ask Mamma'!"



"And Allan *didn't* ask Mamma. That was naughty."

"They're on'y 'ittle ones!" said the little boy again.

"But my little boy mustn't do *little* naughty things," said Mamma, "else they will grow into *great* naughties one of these days."

Mamma took away the raisins, and Allan looked on very soberly, but he did not cry for them, for he knew he ought not to have them.

Marion had stood by listening to this, and she seemed to understand why Allan could not have the raisins.

"May we play tea with some of the cooky, auntie?" said she.

"Yes, darling; if Allan is sorry he was naughty he may play with you again."

The little boy gave Mamma a very penitent kiss, and then the two children began a quiet feast, with bits of cooky on the plates, instead of the raisins. But in a moment Mamma brought a ripe apple, which Jimmy had just found, and sliced it upon one of the plates. That was nice. It tasted ever so much better than stolen raisins could possibly have done.





PUSSY'S PERFORMANCE.







## CHAPTER XXII.

## MUSIC.

**J**IMMY rushed into the parlor, where Ruth and Eva happened to be, exclaiming: "O girls! come down to the river for a walk, will you? We haven't been down there in a long while!"

"I can't go, Jimmy. Miss Dormer is coming to give me my music lesson pretty soon," said Ruth.

"Oh dear! That reminds me that Miss Dormer is coming for *all* the lessons next week. Well, I must 'make hay while the sun shines.' I've lots to do before vacation is over!" and away went Jimmy, with some new thought in his mind.

"Forgot all about the walk, didn't he?" said Eva; "but I didn't want to go very much.

"See here, Marie, small child! If Miss Dormer is coming in a few minutes, you'd better carry off these things. Here's a doll, and a ball, and the old cat and all!"

"That's a rhyme, if you take it in time'!" said Ruth.

"Well, then, Puss may set it to music. Here, Puss!"

Eva caught up poor, unwilling Tab, and put her paw on the piano.

"Oh, Eva, that's like what I was just reading about!" cried Arthur. "Listen to this. Cats do play on the piano some-



times! It's a letter from an old lady to some little children, and she says:

“Our pussy loves music. Isn't that funny? But she does. For every time she can get into the parlor, she will jump up and walk on the keys of the piano, to hear the sound. Sometimes she will stand upon the piano stool, and touch the keys, one after another, with her paws. Mrs. Brown says she is trying to practise the scales!

“I am sorry to say that sometimes she comes in from out of doors, and runs into the parlor without washing her paws. Then she leaves little round, muddy prints upon the white keys.

“What a careless puss! You know better than to run into Mamma's parlor with muddy feet, don't you, little ones?

“Of course you do; and our little boy here knows that he must wash his hands first, if he wants to play Yankee Doodle on the piano. But then we cannot teach cats as we can our dear little children. I must tell you what happened to Pussy the other night.

“We do not like to let Puss stay about the house at night. Mrs. Brown wants her to stay in the cellar, or in the outer kitchen, and keep the rats away like a good useful cat.

“But Pussy loves dearly to stay around the house when all the folks are asleep; then she can do just what she likes,



with no one to say: "Ah, ah, Pussy!" or, "Scat, naughty Puss!" So she tries to hide every night, just when she sees us lock the doors, and wind up the clock, as if we were getting ready to go to bed.

"One night we could not find her at all. So we were obliged to go to bed, and leave Pussy to have her own way.

"Just after I got into a nice nap, I was awakened by a sound of music. What was it?

"I listened, and pretty soon I heard it again. It was Pussy in the parlor, playing her tune! "Aha," said I, "Miss Puss, now I have found you out! Now you have betrayed yourself!"

"So I slipped on my wrapper and took my night-lamp and went into the parlor. Sure enough! there was Pussy having a grand time all by herself. She didn't want to see old Aunty come in at all!

"But I took her up and put her in the cellar. "There, Pussy," said I, "that is the place for you now; we do not care for music at night."

"That is what Aunt Margaret wrote to the little ones. Do you believe it is true, Eva?" Arthur asked doubtfully.

"Yes, it is, I know," said Ruth. "I remember Mamma said she knew the person who wrote about that, and she had seen the pussy cat."



"Of course it is true!" cried Eva. "Come, Puss, you play Ruth's piece nicely now, and then he'll believe it!"

So Eva took the cat's paw, and made her play the air which Ruth had been practising for two or three days; only she supplied the bass herself, with her left hand.

Ruth sat looking on in astonishment. Eva turned around, laughing, when Pussy slipped away from her. She thought Ruth was vexed, because she had mimicked her practising.

"Oh, Ruthie, I didn't mean to vex you!" said Eva. "I'm always doing something to put people out!"

"Why, no; I'm not vexed!" cried Ruth. "But, Eva, you know that march, or you couldn't make Pussy play it. I thought you said you didn't know how to play!"

"No. When you asked me, I said: '*I don't* play.' I do not now, I'm sure,—so that is true; and I thought I had forgotten all I ever learned; but I remembered that march when you began to practise it, for I learned it once."

"But what made you give up practising?" asked Ruth. "Did your mother want you to stop taking lessons?"

"No; but I didn't want to, and I coaxed her to let me stop. Papa was sorry,—he wants me to learn to play well. Now you look as if you thought I was very naughty. You might as well say so!"

"But, Ruthie," said Eva, in a low voice, "I couldn't bear



to go on after Katie died! We took our lessons together, and we used to play nice little duets. It was so lonesome without her! Mamma understood, so she let me stop."

"Poor Eva!" said Ruth, kissing her. "How you did miss your sister!

"But I wouldn't give up the music, if I were you, if your Papa wants you to learn. Suppose you practise now, the rest of the time you are here, and surprise him, when he gets better and you go home. *Do*, Eva! You wont mind so much after the first of it."

"It wouldn't be worth while to begin now, we shall go home so soon."

"Why you know you may be here until the last of September. You can do a good deal in three or four weeks. Let's go and see what Mamma says!"

Eva went willingly. They met Mrs. Brooks in the hall, and she said: "I was just coming to look for you, Eva."

Ruth began at once to tell about the music. "Don't you think it would be nice for Eva to begin and practise now, mamma?" she asked.

"I do, indeed, dear. It would be an excellent plan. But I have a letter from Eva's mother, and I want to tell her what it says. Do you mind Ruth hearing, too, Eva?"

"Why, no, indeed, auntie. I tell Ruth everything now!"



Eva looked a little troubled and anxious. She could not think what the letter could be about.

Her Aunt Agatha told her the contents very tenderly. Eva's father was no better, but rather worse; and her mother was quite anxious about him. The Doctor had recommended a stay of some weeks at Cape Raye, for the change of climate and the sea air.

"We shall set off directly," the letter said, "if we may leave our children yet longer under your care. I would be very glad if Eva may study with your children, when they begin again with their governess. And I hope my dear girl will relieve you of the care of little Marie as much as possible. I enclose a note for her."

Eva read her mamma's note silently, and there were tears in her eyes when she looked up.

"Will you keep us, auntie?" she asked, trying to smile.

"Yes, dear, with pleasure. And we can do as your mamma wishes about lessons. Miss Dormer is to begin coming next Monday, and I know she will willingly attend to another scholar.

"And I advise you to begin practising directly, Eva; then you can take lessons with Ruth, and if you make good progress it will be a very pleasant surprise indeed for your parents."



"I will, auntie; Ruth has three or four pieces that I used to play. May I practise those to begin with, Ruth?"

"Of course you may; let's go and pick them out!"

Eva was quite in earnest about her music, and her auntie was very glad to see it; she rightly judged that doing something to please the absent parents would make her feel happier.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A NEW FRIEND.

**A**T breakfast time, the next day, the Doctor remarked:  
"I am going out on the Fairview road to-day, Ruthie, and if Mamma can spare you I would like to take you along, and let you stop at the Morton's; you know Edith, don't you? Her mother says she seldom sees any girls of her own age."

"I wish you would go, too, Eva; we three can ride comfortably on the seat,—you two do not take up very much room."

Ruth did not answer at once. Jimmy caught her eye across the table, and he began to make gestures, as if mocking some very haughty person.



"What is the matter, girls? Don't you want to go?" asked Mamma. "It is a beautiful morning, and I can spare Ruth as well as not."

"I'd like the drive with Papa," said Ruth, "but—but—I don't like Edith Morton very much!"

"What do you know about her to dislike, daughter?" asked the Doctor, a little gravely.

"Oh, nothing, Papa,—only, she has such a proud way I didn't think I should want to go there; but I'll go if you want me to."

"I think you have judged her unkindly, my child; she seems to me a very lovely girl. I have seen her a number of times, too. Her baby brother has been quite sick, and his illness has made him very fretful. Mrs. Morton says no one can quiet him so well as Edith, and she will sit and hold him and sing to him by the hour.

"I found her tending him the last time I called there. It was a pretty picture. Mrs. Morton was not in the room, and the child fretted at the sight of a stranger; but his young nurse soothed him in a very gentle way.

"I do not believe a child can be very disagreeable who is so loving and kind to a younger brother or sister."

Eva blushed; she was thinking of her impatience with little Marion; and Ruth, too, looked uncomfortable, for she





THE SISTER.







felt that she had been unkind to Edith, in her thoughts and words.

"Well," said the Doctor, as they arose from the table, "if I am to have the company of these girlyes this morning they must be ready directly."

"Are you going, Ruthie?" whispered Eva.

"Yes; will you go, too? Please do!"

"If you want me to; yes,—and we must run and get ready!"

The Doctor was going to stop at Mrs. Morton's a moment to see after the baby, so Ruth and Eva were not obliged to go in alone.

Edith came to see them, and she began to talk at once in a very friendly way, so that her young guests felt quite at their ease.

"Do you like to look at these?" said Edith, taking down a stereoscope and a box of views.

She was beginning to describe the pictures, when a wailing cry was heard from the next room. Edith stood it a few moments, then she said:

"Would you mind my taking little Clary? Mother has a bad headache this morning, for she was up in the night with him, and he don't like his nurse much."

"Oh no; do bring him here!" said Ruth, eagerly.



"No, I must take you in there. This parlor does not have the morning sun, and it is too cool here for him. Come, we'll take the stereoscope, and I can tell you about the pictures while I hold Clary."

It was a home-like, cosey sitting-room into which Edith led the girls, and they were both glad to escape from the stately parlor. There were no state rooms in the Doctor's house; every part of it was meant to be used, and was needed for use.

Little Clary held out both arms to his sister as she entered, and laid his head on her shoulder as if perfectly satisfied.

After the girls had looked through the stereoscopic views, which were very interesting, Edith produced a curious little puzzle, made of ivory rings, to amuse them; and by that time they felt so well acquainted that they did not need any stepping-stones, but talked and laughed merrily.

Presently Rosalie came in,—the child of whom Laura had talked so much. She knew that they came with Dr. Brooks, and said to Ruth:

"I saw your sister the other day, *didn't* I?"

"Not my sister, exactly; but just the same to me," Ruth answered.

"Is she *your* sister, then?" Rosalie asked Eva. When Eva also said "No," the child seemed surprised. "I thought



she lived with you," said she. Edith looked interested, but she seemed to think it would not be polite to ask questions.

So Ruth hastened to explain. "Laura is our adopted sister," said she; "she is my cousin. Her father and mother are dead."

"And is that pale boy with brown eyes her brother?" asked Edith.

"No; that is Arthur Manning. He has no brother or sister. Laura's brother is a little fellow; his name is Paul. There's a houseful of children at our house," Ruth continued, laughing; "you must come and see how many!"

"Oh, I should like to! I mean to come as soon as I can. I should think you would have real nice times, so many together."

The Doctor came back and stopped for Ruth and Eva before they expected him. Edith and Rosie came out to the gate with them, and begged them to "come again."

"O papa, you were right, and I'm ashamed that I took such a dislike to Edith. She is *real* kind and pleasant!"

So said Ruth as soon as they drove away from the house; and Eva joined in praising their new friend.

"Another time, then, my dear children, do not allow yourselves to become so prejudiced against a person of whom you know very little."



Edith and her little sister came very soon to return the girls' visit. Their father was coming into the village one afternoon, two or three days after, and as he was to be busied there some two hours or more, he brought them to see the Doctor's children.

It happened that the young people were all out, attending a regatta in the back yard. The little steamer, the two race-boats of which you have heard before, and a new yacht which the boys had just rigged out, were all out on the big tub, for a grand display.

The boats were all decked out with colored silk flags, and manned by paper crews, while gaily dressed paper ladies sat upon the decks. The girls had been for some time busy with scissors, colored papers, and gum arabic, and they were as much interested as the boys in the grand turn-out.

Mrs. Brooks met the young visitors at the door, and when they asked for the girls, she said, laughingly: "Shall I take you out where they are?" and led them out to the group which surrounded the great tub.

Such a merry greeting as there was! Rosie was delighted with the boats, and Laura told her all about them. "Now the steamboat is ready to start. See, there she goes!"

This was a complete novelty to the visitors, and amused them very much. Edith seemed to like the boys; their merry



talk was something new to her, for she had no brother but little Clarence. "I shall be glad when Clary grows old enough to like such things!" she said. "Boys make it so lively about a place!"

"I think they do," laughed Eva. "I suspect Aunt Agatha thinks so sometimes."

"‘Aunt Agatha!’ Does she mean your mamma, Ruth? I never knew any one who had that name, but it sounds so natural. My Cousin Olive is always talking about a ‘Miss Agatha’ who taught school in Carfield, where she spent a Summer once."

"In Carfield! Why, that was Mamma! She had a little school there, and we used to go to it,—before she was our Mamma, you know. But that was *years* ago," added Ruth.

"Oh, yes; five years ago, at least, for Olive was a little girl then, and now she is quite a young lady. But do you remember her,—Olive Waters?"

"I do, I do!" cried Eva, clapping her hands. "Don't you know, Ruth, she stayed at the hotel?"

Ruth recollected her then, and they all went to find "Aunt Agatha," and tell her of this discovery.

Mrs. Brooks was very much pleased, and asked Edith all about her cousin Olive.



"I shall write to Olive directly," Edith declared, "and tell her I have found her 'Miss Agatha.'"

"And I shall tell her," she added aside to Eva, "that I don't wonder she loved her so much!"

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### ARTHUR'S TROUBLE.

**T**HE next Monday morning the whistle sounded three times, at nine o'clock, and the children all knew what it meant.

They went into their school-room at nine, and began to study, and Miss Dormer, their teacher, came to them at ten.

Miss Dormer lived a little out of the village, and had quite a walk to come to her pupils.

So she came at ten, and stayed until three o'clock, with an hour's recess for dinner. She dined at the Doctor's on school days.

The children were glad to see their teacher again, in her old place, for she was a kind, pleasant young lady, and they all liked her very much.

Paul and Marion did not go into the school-room until





RUTH AT THE WINDOW.







Miss Dormer came; in fact, Marie only went in to say her letters, unless she wanted to stay longer; but she and little Allan might stay there, if they wished, as long as they were quiet. They generally liked to stay there very much, looking at picture-books, or marking upon their little slates, for an hour or so.

Ruth liked to study, and she was glad to begin again. Eva was with her in some studies, which was pleasant for them both.

One morning Ruth was standing at her favorite window, in the hall, near the school-room, a little before school time. She had a book on the window-sill, and was studying very diligently, when she was startled by a sound which was very like a sob.

Ruth looked around and listened. The sound came from the school-room, and she went in to see who was in trouble.

Arthur sat there alone, bending over a lesson-book on the table. He looked pale and tired, and was crying quietly by himself.

"Why, Artie, dear, what is the matter? Why are you studying so early? School time comes soon enough for *you*, I'm sure."

Arthur brushed away his tears and tried to smile, but the tears would come again.



"Do tell me, Arthur. Are you sick? Shall I call Mamma?"

"No; please don't. I—I only wanted to try to get my lesson before Miss Dormer came, and my head aches so I can't."

"Then you ought not to try. Papa wouldn't let you, dear Arthur. You know he says you must only study when you feel well enough."

"But, Ruth, you don't know about it! They think I'm so stupid about lessons. I know they must think so, for there's Laura, 'most two years younger than I, and she is ahead of me!"

"But we all know you are sick, and have never been very well, while Laura has scarcely ever had an ill day. I should suppose she might be ahead of you! And it is nothing to be ashamed of, either."

"But it's hard to be the only dull one, Ruth. You can't understand, because you can learn so fast. I wish——"

"There's Mamma!" exclaimed Ruth, in a tone of relief. "*She* will tell you why it isn't right to feel so!"

"Arthur crying? Our patient boy! What is the trouble, my dear child?" "Mamma Brooks" placed her cool hands on Arthur's forehead, as she spoke, and looked anxiously at Ruth.

"I'm glad you've come just now, mamma. I found Artie crying over his lesson, and he feels so badly because he cannot get on like the rest of us, who have nothing to hinder us. It isn't right, is it, mamma? Wont you tell him why?"



"I will, by and by. Arthur and I will have a nice little talk by ourselves some time; but I want him to do an errand for me now, just as quickly as possible."

This was said in a brisk, cheerful way, and Arthur brightened up a little, as he asked, "What is it?"

"I want you to find Jimmy, and ask him to harness up old Charley, and you and he go after Miss Dormer. I heard her say that she had some errands to do at the store, before school this morning. Now, if you are quick about it, you can surprise her by calling for her, and save her the walk."

"I'll go right off, then!" said Arthur; and he was as good as his word.

"Mamma, you always think of the very best thing!" said Ruth. Then she went back to her grammar lesson, feeling thankful that she was well and strong, and, as Arthur said, able to learn fast.

The boys met Miss Dormer just coming out of her gate. Jimmy drove back by the longest way, because it was such a pleasant morning; and when they reached the main street, he jumped down and ran home to begin his lessons, leaving Arthur to drive Miss Dormer up to the store and back, which he was proud to do.

When they reached the Doctor's, Mrs. Brooks met them in the hall. She asked Miss Dormer to excuse Arthur that



morning. "If he gets over this headache he can go into the school-room after dinner," she said.

But when the Doctor came in and felt Arthur's pulse, he said "No."

"What can have excited the child so much?" he asked his wife; and then she told him of his trouble that morning.

The Doctor gave Arthur some medicine, and then told him to lie still on the lounge, and try to get rested. The poor little boy was very glad to do this, for he felt tired, and his head began to ache again.

Pretty soon he fell asleep, and had a nice long nap. When he awoke, Mrs. Brooks was sitting near him with her sewing.

Arthur smiled, and sat up. "Do you feel rested, my boy?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, ma'am. Is it most dinner-time?"

"It is past dinner-time, dear. We thought the sleep would do you more good than anything else; but you shall have some dinner now."

A very nice little dinner was soon placed upon the table,—such as might tempt the appetite of a sick boy, and Arthur quite enjoyed it.

After he had finished his dinner, the little boy lingered



around Mrs. Brooks's chair, toying with her spools and scissors. Pretty soon he looked up and said:

"You said we 'should have a talk by and by,' Mamma Brooks. Was I naughty to make such a time about my lesson this morning?"

"I think you forgot some things just then, my dear. Let us see if we cannot think them over now, so that you will feel better about the lessons and school work.

"Does not our Heavenly Father know that you are weak and sickly, Arthur? and could He not make you well and strong, like the other children, if He pleased?"

"Yes'm," said the boy, thoughtfully.

"Then you feel pretty sure that He has some good reason for letting you be so different, and giving you this trouble to bear, don't you?"

Arthur smiled, and said "Yes," in a tone that showed he meant it.

"Well, then, dear, you must trust Him to do what is best for you; and you must *show* that you trust Him by bearing patiently all the hard things that your sickness brings with it.

"That which troubled you this morning was one of these hard things. You do not like to be put back in your lessons, and see Laura go beyond you; but you know Uncle



Doctor says you must not try to study when you feel badly, so you must not mind this.

“Being slow about your lessons when you cannot help it, is one of the trials that my boy will try to bear cheerfully, just as he tries to be patient when he is in pain, will he not?”

“And you know, Arthur, the dear Saviour who bore so much for us will help you to feel right about this, if you ask Him.”

Mamma Brooks knew by the look on Arthur’s face that he understood her, and would try to remember what she had said.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### SICKNESS IN THE NURSERY.

**A**RTHUR was used to being the only ailing one among the children. The others, as Ruth said of Laura, seldom had an ill day; but about a week after the scene of the last chapter, Arthur had company enough in this respect.

Little Paul, usually so full of fun and good nature, was very cross one morning—so all the children said; no one could please him.



When Miss Dormer came, and he went into the school-room, it was not much better. He cried over his spelling lesson, and read his primer page all wrong.

When he went back to his seat he laid his head down as if he felt badly, and Arthur, who was watching him, said:

“Miss Dormer, I guess Paul has a headache to-day.”

Miss Dormer watched him a moment, and thought so too. “Do you want to go down to your mamma, Paul?” she asked. “You need not study any more to-day.”

The little boy crept downstairs to find Mamma. She and Cousin Maria were busy canning fruit, but when Paul came in she saw that he was not well, and left off to attend to him.

By evening the Doctor pronounced it a case of measles. Then Mamma knew that she had business on hand, for none of the younger children had had the measles.

Paul thought it was hard work being sick. He had a very hot fever, and was quite ill for two or three days.

Jimmy brought him the ripest grapes that he could find on the vines—they were just beginning to ripen up nicely—and Laura hunted under the trees for the very prettiest apples that fell. Cousin Maria cut some of her roses, and put them on the stand by his bedside. The children thought she must be very sorry for Paul, for she did not often cut her monthly roses.



As Mamma stood by the bed, preparing some drink for the sick boy, he asked: "Does Arthur feel like this when you say he has a headache, mamma?" Paul was evidently thinking that he should know how to pity Arthur after this.

Laura was the next to be taken ill; and, within a day or two after, little Allan and Marion were both seized with the disease.

Mamma and Cousin Maria and Nancy had their hands full at this time, with four sick children.

Ruth and Eva were very helpful, out of school hours. They could not do much for the little patients while they were really sick abed; but, as everybody knows who has taken care of sick children, the getting-well time is the hardest for the nurses.

When the little invalids began to sit up, and wanted to play about the room, but were weak and fretful yet, there was work enough for the two elder sisters, especially as little Jessie now took her turn with the measles.

Poor little Jessie, as it proved, had the hardest time of all. She was dangerously ill for two or three days, and those were dark days to the household.

Mamma did not leave the little sufferer at all. Cousin Maria took charge of the house, and Ruth and Eva devoted themselves to the four *convalescent* ones.





THE SICK BOY.







Arthur and Jimmy came in to help amuse them sometimes, but it was necessary to keep as quiet as possible, because of the sick baby, and the girls were often at a loss what to do next.

It was new work for Eva. She often thought of Edith Morton with her little brother, and the thought helped her to be patient, even when Marie was most fretful and exacting.

The day that they were most anxious about Baby Jessie was the day that the children were the most troublesome.

Miss Dormer did not come that week. Jimmy had been up in the nursery an hour or more, and made a grand menagerie. Every wreck of an "animum," as Marie would have said, was brought to light from the play-closet, and made to hold up its head and do duty in the procession. Besides, the girls cut some monkeys and other things out of paper, and Jimmy himself was the elephant, going on all fours, with a long roll of paper held in his mouth for a trunk. This amused the little folks some time.

When they tired of it, Ruth took Allan on her lap to rock him, and Eva and Jimmy played "hide the handkerchief" with the rest. But the children made too much noise when they found the treasure, so Nancy came in to hush them, for they disturbed the baby.

Then Jimmy remembered that he had to help Mark in



the garden, getting in potatoes; and when he went out, Laura began to tease: "Can't I go out in the garden just a little while, Ruthie? It wouldn't hurt me a bit, I know."

And Paul chimed in, "I know Papa would let us go!" Then when Ruth said "No" positively, they both felt very cross; in fact, they did before.

"Tell us a story, Ruth!" Paul demanded,—for the twentieth time that day, Ruth thought.

"Well; shall it be about a giant?"

Each little head was raised at the mention of this, and so Ruth went on:

"A great big giant, and *very* ugly. I know, though we cannot see him. His name is 'Giant Fret.'"

"And he's always in a pet!" said a voice at the door; and all the children sprang to meet Uncle Horace.

It was hard keeping them still now, you may believe! Ruth kept saying "Hush-sh!" and the little ones would not have minded, but Uncle Horace said, "You must be still, or I cannot stay here. Think of poor, darling little sister! Let's talk in whispers now."

So he talked to them in a funny hoarse whisper, and the children all tried to answer just so. This answered the purpose until they had got over the excitement of seeing him enter.



Grandma Deane had come with Uncle Horace, but he did not tell them so just yet. The little ones would have been impatient to see her, and she was in their mamma's room, with little Jessie.

"Well, I interrupted Ruthie's story when I came in, didn't I? Has Giant Fret been around here, Ruth?"

"Yes, I'm afraid he has. Ask Uncle Horace to tell you about him, children. He can tell you better than I can."

"Don't believe I can. He doesn't come to our house much. Grandma Deane is so good-natured that he does not like the place."

"Does he like cross people, then? Tell us about him, please!" said Laura.

"Let me see. He pulls people by the ears, or the hair, doesn't he, Ruth? and draws their faces all into a snarl, like this!"—and Uncle Horace made up a peevish, whining face, that made the little ones laugh.

"I really cannot tell you much more about him; but I know how to drive him away. Shall I tell you how to do it? Put on a smiling face,—so!"

Every little face in the room wore a smile instantly; and I suppose Giant Fret took himself out at the window, which was open a little at the top. Certainly there was no more fretting in the nursery for some time.



Papa said, when he came in to see the children, that there should be a fire lighted in the grate in the dining-room, and all the little invalids should be taken down to dinner.

So, when dinner-time came, they were wrapped in shawls, and Papa, Ruth, Jimmy, and Nancy each carried a child downstairs. Such a funny procession as that was!

And there was Grandma Deane, waiting to see them. And Mamma came down, looking happier than the children had seen her for two or three days, for little Jessie was quietly asleep, and the Doctor thought she would be better when she waked.

The children were allowed to stay downstairs two or three hours, with Grandma Deane and Uncle Horace.

On the whole, they had quite a happy afternoon; and they told Uncle Horace to tell Grandpa Deane that they were "all getting well, real fast!"



## CHAPTER XXVI.

## UNCLE HORACE'S LETTER.

**T**HE next day but one, after Grandma and Uncle Horace came to Preston, the children were expecting to go out doors for a little while, in the middle of the day, when the sun was bright and warm.

They were disappointed in this, for it proved to be a damp, chilly sort of day, when it would not do at all for little invalids to venture out.

The children thought it was rather hard, and I fear there would have been some peevish looks, had not Ruth said something about old Giant Fret, which made them all laugh.

It made them all think of Uncle Horace too; and they began to talk about his visit, and what a dear, good, funny uncle he was.

While they were talking thus, Papa came into the room. "What are you saying about Uncle Horace?" said he. "Here is a letter which I think must surely be from him. Listen!

"To my dear youthful nephews, and nieces, too, in sooth, — Paul, Laura, Allan, Jimmy, Eva, Arthur, Marie, Ruth.'"

"Oh, papa!" cried Ruth, laughing, "it did not come through the post-office directed so, did it?"



"It certainly did, my dear. But it was enclosed in another envelope."

No matter how it came, the other children thought. They were eager to hear it read. A letter from Uncle Horace was almost as a talk with him.

So Ruth sat on the sofa, where they could all crowd around her, and opened the letter. A folded paper was with it, which the little ones wanted to open at once, but Ruth said, "Let's read the letter first.

"*Dear Children*,—I have been thinking all day of the nest full of pale faces which I left in Preston, and so I believe I may as well write you a letter. Perhaps it may help to cheer you up and make you laugh. Who knows?

"Have you found out my secret yet? If you have not, be patient. The time will come soon.

"What do you say? "You know nothing about a secret?" I know you do not, but I left one behind me, in Mark's charge.

"Now, don't all run after Mark! My secret is just something that I hope will do you all good. A sort of medicine of my contriving.

"You have heard the good Doctor, your Papa, talk of giving his patients "wine and bark," I dare say. I don't suppose he will order *wine* for such young patients as you are; but as



soon as he says some bark will be good for you, then ask Mark for my medicine.'"

"What *can* he mean?" Jimmy exclaimed.

"I'm sure I don't know. I suppose we shall found out soon, as he says," answered Ruth. "But I hope none of us will have to take what they call bark, if it's the same as quinine, for it's horridly bitter, I think."

"*You* wouldn't have to take it, for you've not been sick; it would be for us, I suppose!" said Laura.

"But go on, please, Ruth; there's more of the letter."

Ruth read on:

"'Now, in case the Doctor thinks it is not quite time for my medicine to be given you, he may wish I had kept still about it; so I must hasten to talk of something else.

"'You remember Grandpa Deane's old secretary, with such a number of little drawers and pigeon-holes, and the desk that draws out, to write upon?

"'I dare say he has let you all peep into the little drawers, as he used to let me when I was a small chap. I never could believe that there was not something good, or something very surprising, in those drawers, just because I was not allowed to open them by myself.

"'But there is one part of the old secretary into which



you never peeped, I am quite sure. That is a deep place in the top,—a sort of box with a lid.

“‘There have been papers stored away in that place for years, only dusted once in a while.

“‘Yesterday Grandpa and I thought we would take out all the papers from the old secretary top, and look them over. We had a task, I can tell you!

“‘We found slips cut from newspapers years ago, and letters and documents of all sorts. There were some things that made us laugh, and some that *almost* made us cry.

“‘I send you one of the laughable things; but you must take good care of it, for Grandma Deane wants to keep it, she says.

“‘Do you not think it is a funny picture? and would you ever guess who the children were?

“‘Grandma says the little girl was your mamma, and the urchin who is giving her such a bear’s hug, all for an apple, was,—oh, I do not like to tell! You must guess.

“‘Grandma says a gentleman who was boarding with her a little while when your mamma and I were children of that size,—there, I’ve told! Well, this gentleman witnessed this scene, and it amused him so much that he drew this picture of it. Show it to your mamma, and ask her if she believes the likenesses were true.’”





THE PICTURE THAT UNCLE FOUND.







Here Ruth stopped to show the picture to the rest, and they all laughed over it, and wanted to run at once and show it to their mamma.

“Wait until she comes down,” said Ruth. “Jessie may be asleep. Besides, I want to finish the letter.”

There was not much more:

“‘I do hope our darling Jessie Baby is much better to-day. Grandpa Deane is very anxious about his little pet. That was the reason that I proposed to look over the old papers in the secretary; I wanted to divert his mind from the subject.

“‘Dear me! how could I write such words as those in a letter to my *little* friends! But I will not scratch them out, for you will say, “There! Uncle Horace has blotted up his paper!”

“‘Now, good-by, my dear ones. I hope you will all be well and merry again soon.

“‘Your loving

“‘UNCLE HORACE.’”

When Mamma came down for a few minutes, the children showed her the letter and the picture, and she laughed heartily over them.

She said she could just remember having that basketful of very choice apples one day, and how the gentleman



laughed at Horace's way of coaxing her to give him one; but she had quite forgotten the picture.

Then the children begged her to tell them Uncle Horace's secret, if she knew about it. But Mamma laughed and said, "Papa must decide about medicines; they must wait and ask him."

So when the Doctor came in, he was at once beset with questions about the secret.

He put on a very grave look, and felt the pulse of each child. Then he said slowly, "Yes, I think we may as well have that bark brought in," and he left the room.

You might have heard a pin drop while the children waited, they were so bewildered by this very odd secret.

Presently they heard Papa returning; and they heard the bark too,—“Bow, wow, wow!”

Yes, it was a little dog. “Such a beauty!” “Such a dear, lively little fellow!” “Just what they all wanted!”

So the children exclaimed as they gathered around Uncle Horace's gift,—his secret.

“But why didn't he give him to us that day?” questioned Paul.

“I know!” said Laura. “Because dear Baby was so sick, and we should have made too much noise with him.”

Ruth thought the dog was a little like Frisk, and then the



children all wanted to call him "Frisk." But Mark said his name was Fido, and it would puzzle him to call him by another name.

That was a very good name, they all thought; and Fido became the pet and playmate of the children from that time.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### CHESTNUTTING.

**I**N another day or two the four children who had been prisoners so long, were quite well, and had leave to run out when they pleased; only they had to be careful about putting on wraps, because they had been ill, and because the weather was fast growing colder now.

Little Jessie was better, but her papa said they must make a little house-plant of her through the Winter, only taking her out on very pleasant days.

Miss Dormer began to come again, as soon as the baby was out of danger, so that the older children could go on with their studies. And after a few days her scholars were all busy with lessons once more, coming into the school-room with rosy cheeks, from their out-door play after breakfast.



All but one. There were no roses upon poor little Arthur's cheeks; and there were many days when he was not able to study at all, nor to run about and play with the others out of school.

The Doctor watched him carefully, and was obliged to give him medicines every day.

The children who had been ill themselves knew better now how to sympathize with Arthur. They were careful not to tease him when he was feeling badly, and they seemed to wonder that he was so patient, when he had so much pain, and had to take medicines, and lie still so much.

Laura and Jimmy were wondering aloud about this one day, when they were with Mamma.

"Dear little boy!" she said; "do you know why I think he is so gentle and cheerful, and bears his illness so well? It is because he believes this verse: 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'"

"That is a sweet verse, mamma!" said Laura, thoughtfully.

Laura began to say "Papa" and "Mamma," just as Paul did, while she was sick. No one made any remark about it, but the good Doctor and his wife were pleased that she did so, and the children were glad too.

One day the children had leave to go after chestnuts, as soon as school was out.



It was a beautiful Autumn day. There had been just frost enough to open the burs nicely, and Mark knew where there were a good many chestnut trees, not more than two miles from home.

Mark was told to have old Charley harnessed all ready, and Mamma told Miss Dormer she might excuse the children half an hour earlier than usual, so that they might start in good season.

There was a great scampering downstairs from the school-room at half-past two. Hats and coats and baskets had been laid all ready to hand, before school, so that no time should be lost.

"Where's Arthur?" cried Jimmy, as the wagon drove up to the door.

"I'll find him," said Laura. "Come, Artie, make haste; we're all ready!"

Arthur had not been in school that day, but he had thought he should like very much to go chestnutting.

But he shook his head when Laura came to call him. "I don't believe I feel well enough," he said. "I'm so tired!"

He smiled, but the tears would start to his eyes. It was hard for a little ten-year-old boy to feel so languid and ill, while the merry voices of his playmates were ringing through the hall, calling him to join them.



"Poor Artie!" said Laura; then she walked out slowly through the hall, thinking.

Cousin Maria was away from home that day. It was Nancy's afternoon out, too; so Mamma would be kept with Jessie most of the time, and Arthur looked so lonely!

Laura stood still a moment, as she reached the door, making up her mind. Then she ran out to speak to Jimmy.

The rest of the children were bestowing themselves and their baskets and extra shawls in the wagon, and Mark was directing Jimmy which road to take to reach the chestnut trees.

"Jimmy," whispered Laura, pulling his sleeve, "Arthur don't feel well enough to go, and I'm going to stay with him; but don't tell the others about it."

Jimmy gave her a quick look which made his little adopted sister feel very happy, and Mark suggested:

"Why not take your teacher home? You drive within sight of her house."

"To be sure we can!" said Jimmy. Miss Dormer had just come out on the steps, and he called to her, while Laura ran around out of sight.

"Miss Dormer, will you ride home? We have plenty of room; Artie and Laura are not going."



"Not going?" exclaimed Ruth; but she forgot to ask further, for a new thought struck her: "Oh, Miss Dormer, do go after chestnuts with us!"

"Yes, do, do!" chimed in the little ones, as they made room for their teacher on the back seat.

"If you don't mind being crowded a little!" said Ruth, laughing.

"Not at all. Really, I am tempted to go with you to the woods. Such a fine day, and such a merry company! But are you sure Laura does not want to go? I don't understand it; I thought she could scarcely think of anything else to-day!"

"But she doesn't; it's all right!" said Jimmy, decidedly. "Get up, Charley!"

Laura watched them drive away, from her hiding-place, and dashed away a few tears when they were gone.

"Miss Dormer will have a nice time, and they couldn't have taken her if I had gone; so it is all right, two ways!" she said to herself.

Then she ran into the house and appeared to Arthur, greatly to his surprise.

He was leaning back in the arm-chair before the grate, with his eyes half closed; but the eyes opened widely when he heard Laura's step.



"I'm come to stay with you, Artie, and we'll have a nice time all by ourselves."

"Oh, Laura, and you wanted to go so much!"

"Well, I don't, *now*; so come, what shall we do?"

They decided to get Laura's paint box and color some pictures. It was a grand time for that when the younger ones were away, for Paul and Marie were very fond of getting Laura's brushes, and making daubs, when they saw her painting.

They each found an old magazine, and took great pains in painting the pictures, consulting each other about the colors of different objects.

Mamma came in soon after they began. She had come to look for Arthur, and she was surprised to find the two children chatting merrily over their paints.

She understood it all without many words, and gave the little girl a loving kiss, saying:

"I am glad to have such a good little nurse for my sick boy this afternoon."

When Arthur was tired of painting, he went back to the easy chair, and then Laura played Cat's-cradle with him. Then they sat and "guessed names" until the nutting party returned.

Arthur lay back in his chair while they played this; but at last Laura gave him a puzzler, and he was so determined











to guess it that he sat up, and then walked around looking for it.

"W. B.," Laura gave out. Arthur guessed "work basket," and "worsted ball," and "writing book," but still Laura shook her head.

At last, as he was walking around, he called out, "wooden button!" That was right; and while they were laughing over it, Fido's bark was heard, and then the voices of the children.

The nutting party had come home, and Laura said they had been gone such a little while, she didn't believe they had got any nuts at all.

But they *had*. Nearly three quarts, too, of nice chestnuts; and Jimmy set about roasting some for Arthur and Laura, at once.

"Lautie was the only one that thought of you, wasn't she, Arthur?" said Eva. "I'm ashamed of myself, that I didn't think of staying."

"But I didn't want any body to stay!" Arthur protested. "I wouldn't have let Laura stay if I had known; but it was real kind, and we've had such a nice time!"



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## MISS DORMER'S SCHOLARS.

**M**ISS DORMER'S scholars had been very busy since the interruption of sickness. There was a certain book of marks kept upon her desk now, which was to be seen at any time, by Papa or Mamma, Cousin Maria, or even some other friends.

The children had never been marked for their lessons before, and so perhaps this mark book helped to make them orderly and attentive. But I do think they all meant to try and do well in school time for better reasons.

One thing for which they were most apt to lose marks was not being ready for school at the proper hour.

Little folks who study at home, I notice, are more likely to fail in this way than those who have quite a walk to take, to reach their school. The reason is, I suppose, that they think they can be ready in a minute, and so keep on with their play just a little too long.

One morning Paul saw Miss Dormer coming, when he was very far from being ready, for he had been playing out of doors, and his hands were very dirty. So he had to run and beg Nancy to help make him neat, as quickly as possible.

After all, Miss Dormer was in her seat, and had opened



her book, before he came in. So he was almost late, and she shook her head at him.

Then Paul went to get his books and slate, and found them not in their place.

"What is the matter now, little boy?" asked his teacher.

"I can't find my things," said Paul, half crying. "I guess Allan and Marie have been playing here, for it's all a jungle."

"Oh, we didn't!" said little Marion, looking up from her slate.

"I am afraid you have been a little careless yourself, Paul; but I think you mean a *jumble*. You would not like to find yourself in a *jungle*."

"Why, Miss Dormer, what is a jungle?"

The teacher made him spell both words, so that he would remember the difference. Then she told him:

"A jungle is a tangled thicket of trees and bushes. The under-brush, as we call it here in our woods, grows very thick and strong, and there are coarse reeds, too, that are almost as tiresome to walk through."

"I shouldn't mind it, Miss Dormer; why, I love to walk in the thick woods!"

"Yes, but there are tigers in the jungles in India; how would you like to see a large tiger behind a tree, just ready to spring at you?"



"Why, why," said Paul,—he was apt to stammer a little when he was very eager to speak; "why, I'd try to tie the tiger's tail tight to the tree!"

The children all laughed at this; then Jimmy repeated it, and they all began to laugh again, and could not seem to stop.

When they were a little quiet, Miss Dormer asked the older ones if they could tell why Paul's answer made them laugh so. They could not, only they were sure it sounded "very funny."

Then their teacher made them notice that all the words began with one letter—T.

"Sometimes," said Miss Dormer, "persons write a sentence, or a line of poetry, in that way, purposely, for the peculiar effect. You will learn something about that, by and by. And you know some nursery rhymes are written so to make children laugh in trying to say them. For instance:

"Peter Piper Pepper picked a peck of pickled peppers."

"Oh, yes!" cried Laura; "and there's another:

"Robert Rowley rolled a round roll round."

"I think Paul's 'tiger's tail' was the best," said Jimmy.

That afternoon there was a cold rain out-of-doors, and the fire in the nursery did not burn well; so the little folks had leave to go into the kitchen for a good play. It was nice and warm there, and Ellen was gone out.





PAUL, THE DRIVER.







After a while Ruth said: "Well, I think the children must be having a good time, from the noise they make!" and she went and peeped into the kitchen to see what was going on.

They had made a coach of the kitchen table. Paul was driving; he had a seat on top, with baggage around him — odd looking luggage, some of it was! Allan, Laura, and Marion were in the coach — that is, under the table; and four kitchen chairs, which were harnessed up for horses, were being driven at a noisy rate.

"We're going through a jungle, Ruth, and we are afraid a tiger may come. That's the reason I have to drive so fast; and it's hard work getting through, I can tell you!"

"I should suppose it would be, Mr. Paper Cap!" Ruth said, laughing. "And I should think you had been lost in a jungle, by the look of your hair; you cannot see the way to drive, unless you brush it out of your eyes."

Miss Dormer lost two of her scholars soon after this.

Mr. Maxwell became much better, so that he was able to return to his home and to his business. And then Eva and Marion were sent for, their parents being anxious to have them at home once more.

Eva was delighted, of course, to know that her father was almost well again, and that she was soon to see him, and her mamma, and home.



But she was very sorry to leave her dear friends at the Doctor's, and so was little Marion.

"And we shall miss you *ever* so much!" said Ruth. "But oh, Eva! Aren't you glad now that you have practised so much, and have got on so nicely with your music?"

"I don't know how nicely I have got on; but I do hope Papa will be pleased!" said Eva, and her eyes sparkled at the thought of the pleasant surprise she had for him.

Eva and Marie were to journey to their home in Mr. Manning's care. He lived in the same city, and he had come up to see his little son.

Mr. Manning had been up two or three times lately. He was anxious about Arthur, as were all his friends, for the dear boy seemed to grow paler and weaker all the time.

The morning came on which the children were to leave. Breakfast was over, the trunks had been sent to the station, and the wagon was waiting at the door; but Mr. Manning said he thought they would need to wait for the next train,—there were so many "Good-byes" to be said.

Little Marion had to be hugged and kissed by each one of the family. She had been to take leave of the goats, and the chickens, and old Puss, before, and now she was shaking paws with Fido. "Don't you forget me, Fi," she said. "Will you say 'Bow-wow!' and kiss me when I come again?"



Eva had been all around, and kissed them all good-by; but when she reached the door she turned again to throw her arms around her Aunt Agatha once more, kiss Ruth for the third or fourth time, and bend once more lovingly over Arthur as he lay upon the lounge.

“Dear Artie! I *hope* you will be better soon!”

Then the little travelling party drove away, and the house seemed lonesome and dull for a time, although it was still full of children, as most people would have thought.

Ruth received a letter from Eva very soon, and as all the children wanted to hear it read two or three times, perhaps I had better copy it here.

“*Dear Darling Ruth*,—We are at home all safe, and it is nice to be here; only when I think of you all in Preston, I feel just as if I had *two* homes, and I’m going to make believe I have!

“Mr. Manning was real kind to us on the way home. Tell Arthur I think he has a *splendid* Papa, and he must make haste and get well, so as to make him glad.

“I must tell you about something funny. When we got home Papa was out; he did not expect us by that train. Mamma knew when he would be coming home, and just before he came she hid me behind the pantry door and put Marie into an empty barrel that stood there.



"Then when Papa came in he came right downstairs, because he knew dinner would be ready. And Mamma said: 'Please come this way a moment, I want to see what you think of some sugar I have been getting.'

"I heard Papa say, as he came through the hall: 'Why, little woman, you know more about sugar than I do!' But Mamma kept on, and lifted the cover from the barrel.

"Papa looked in, and there was Marie, cuddled down. He caught her up in his arms, and cried out: 'This is the very best sugar I ever saw!'

"Then I ran out from behind the door, and we had such a hugging and kissing time!

"And Ruth, after dinner, and after we had talked a good while, I asked Papa if he wanted to hear his old tune.

"He looked surprised, but he opened the piano and said: 'I shall be glad to hear my little daughter play any tune!'

"And then I played for him; and—but I can't tell you! only I'm so thankful to you and Auntie for making me begin again!

"Now, please write to me as soon as you can, for I want to hear about you all.

"Give my love to everybody. Mamma says she shall write to Aunt Agatha very soon.

"Your loving friend, EVA MAXWELL."



## CHAPTER XXIX.

## WINTER DOINGS.

**T**HE cold, wintry weather had now set in, but the Doctor's children were glad of it; for Winter brought the snow, with all its pleasures, and it brought Christmas, too.

One change which this Winter brought, made all the Doctor's family feel sad. They were obliged to part with dear little Arthur for a time; and with another dear friend, too.

Dr. Brooks had called in two or three other doctors to see Arthur, and they all thought, as he himself did, that it would be best to send the little fellow to a warm climate for the Winter, especially if he went by water.

So his father determined to take him to the South; but he needed some one to take care of Arthur, and at last Cousin Maria said she would go and nurse him, if Mrs. Brooks could spare her.

Good, kind Cousin Maria! She did not like to travel, or to be away from home, even for a short time. But she could not bear to send the sick boy away to be nursed by strangers.

Arthur seemed quite content and cheerful when he was told that Cousin Maria would go with him. He loved her next best to his "Mamma Brooks."



So they started, not many days after Eva and Marion went home.

It was before the first heavy snow-storm came. There had been a light snow two or three times before, but it had not lasted long.

This time the storm came in earnest.

The Doctor was out for several hours during the worst of it, and when it was quite time to expect him home, Laura stationed herself by a window where she could watch for her dear "Papa."

Fido was with her, watching too; and Adelia, Laura's large doll, was snugly asleep in her cradle. Laura had taken more care of her dolls since Marie went away, partly because they made her think of little Marie, and partly because she was now learning to sew, and her mamma allowed her to make doll's clothes for practice.

Jimmy was busy making some wonderful article for a Christmas present, which not even Laura could be allowed to see; and Paul was playing with Allan and Jessie in the nursery. So Laura had only the dog and the doll for company.

As she sat there watching, the little maiden's thoughts flew about as busily as the snow flakes.

She thought of Artie, and how much she missed him;





THE SNOW-STORM.







and Cousin Maria too. She thought of Eva and of Marie, and wondered what they were doing then; but the greater number of thoughts went winging over the road in search of Papa. Why did he not come? Suppose he should be lost in the snow!

Laura felt just ready to cry, when a cheerful voice close beside her made her start, and then turn around with a smile.

"What can my little girl be thinking of, all alone here?" said Mamma.

Laura could hardly tell, only she "wished Papa need not be out in such terrible storms!"

"It is not very pleasant, to be sure, dear; but Papa does not let such hardships hinder him from doing his duty. You know he has gone to see that poor woman who is so very ill."

"Did you put up those things in a basket for her, mamma?"

"Yes; she has no one to make nice things for her, such as sick people need."

"Mamma," said Laura, slowly, "I heard Nancy say to Ellen that she didn't believe Arthur would ever come back; I wish he hadn't gone away!"

"But he is better already, you know, my dear. Cousin



Maria thinks he is improving every day. Only think how nice it is for our sick boy to be where flowers are growing, and the air is soft and warm, instead of in this snow-storm!"

Laura laughed at this. "I don't believe you would let him go out in the storm if he were here!" she said.

"Oh, mamma! see how nicely Ruthie has dressed up my old doll's cradle!"

"Very nicely; but is the bedstead broken that Uncle Horace made?"

"Oh no, but Jessie wants old Lucinda to sleep on that. She is so funny about it! But I don't care; I like the cradle now. Oh, there comes Papa! I see Bob's head bobbing along!"

Sure enough, Bob had brought the Doctor safely home, and all were glad to see him.

The good man shook the snow off his big weather-proof coat, and laughed at his little daughter for being anxious about him.

"You will be glad of this snow by to-morrow, little body!" said he. "It will be good sleighing by that time, and then for a ride with the merry bells, eh?"

"Laura, come!" shouted Paul, the next morning, after breakfast. "Get your things on quick, and let's go out and make a snow-man. Oh, what a splendid Saturday this is!" and the little boy capered about in high glee.



The sun was shining brightly, and the pure, white snow sparkled temptingly indeed. Jimmy was out, working away manfully with Mark, shovelling paths. And in a few minutes Laura, Paul, and little Allan were out also, enjoying a frolic in the snow.

"Now let's begin and make a monstrous snow-man!" said Laura.

So they went to work, but they did not get on very fast until Jimmy came to help them. Then the snow-man grew into shape very fast indeed.

Little Allan was delighted with the deep snow. He tumbled over in it as soon as he went out from the door, and came running back to his mamma, saying merrily:

"O mamma, see! I tumbled down in the snow, and it made my hands all clean!"

"Well, come and let me find some mittens for the little hands," said Mamma, laughing. "I hope all my little boy's *tumbles* will have a useful effect, as this has!"

Allan was half afraid of the snow-man when he was finished, with a pipe in his mouth, an old black hat stuck on his head, and a stick under his arm; but Paul and Laura were charmed with his appearance.

"Let's make him a wife now, and some children, too!" said Laura.



"Oh, ho! If that isn't just like a girl! The idea of a snow-man having a wife and children!" shouted Jimmy.

"I don't see why *not*," Laura said, pouting a little, for she didn't like to be laughed at.

But the pouts soon vanished, for Mark announced that he was to get out the sleigh, bells and all, and go after Ruth, and that two or three little folks might go also.

Ruth, I should have said, had gone to spend a day or two with Edith Morton, before the snow-storm began.

"Are *you* going? Why can't I drive?" asked Jimmy.

"Because the roads are not broken much yet, and you might have an upset."

Jimmy thought that would be fun; but his mamma did not quite agree with him, so he had to give up the reins to Mark.

He comforted himself with thinking that he should have a capital hour to himself for his work on the Christmas gifts.



## CHAPTER XXX.

## CONCLUSION.

**A**ND now we must soon take leave of our houseful of children. We have only room for one more glimpse of them; and it shall be as Arthur enjoyed it—with his mind's eye—when he and Cousin Maria received a whole package of letters, not many days after Christmas.

The first letter which we will copy was from Laura. It began :

*“Dear Arthur,—We all liked your letter; it was real funny. I should like to sit out doors and eat oranges, too; but I like the sleigh-riding and snow-balling very much.*

*“Papa looks glad when he talks of you. I know it is because you are getting well.*

*“When the cold weather is all gone, you will come back to us, wont you? and we will work in our gardens, and have all sorts of fun.*

*“You will scarcely know Jessie when you come back. She is learning to talk very fast.*

*“Ruth thought she had a button in her mouth to-day, and she said: ‘Jessie, what have you got in your mouth?’ ‘Teefe!’ said Jessie.*



"One day she pulled all the needles out of Mamma's knitting work and held them up to Ruth, and said: 'Pins! oh, poor Mamma!'

"I will not try to tell you much about Christmas, because I know Jimmy is writing about that. But we had a happy time. I hope you did, too; I am pretty sure you did, if your father got there in time.

"Give Cousin Maria a good kiss from me. We miss her very much, and you too.

"Next time you must write to your friend,

"LAURA."

Jimmy's letter, as Laura said, was all about Christmas. He told about Santa Claus' visit, and the presents which were found in the stockings—the stockings of all sizes which had been hung around the fireplace on Christmas Eve. This filled two or three pages of the letter, but we have not room to copy it all. Every child knows what sort of things are found in a Christmas stocking, of course.

"But the best part of Christmas came afterward," so Jimmy wrote.

"Grandpa Deane, and Grandma, and Uncle Horace came to spend the day with us. They got here in time to get warm before church time, and then we all went to church together.



"Then after church we had a grand Christmas dinner, and Uncle Horace was so funny! He kept us laughing half the time.

"We had some games after dinner, and then in the evening there was a Christmas tree for the Sunday-school, and we all went—even Baby Jessie, who enjoyed it as much as any one.

"I hope you liked the little presents we sent you; but I know you liked best to have your Papa to spend Christmas with you. Mamma says she is glad there are such pleasant people at your hotel, so that Cousin Maria does not feel lonely there.

"We are having holidays now, but school begins again next week, and I am glad. I mean to study hard this Winter, for do you know, Artie, Papa thinks of sending me to a real boys' boarding-school next year, and I want to get on, so he will not be ashamed of me when I go to school.

"This is a long letter for me to write, so now I will say Good-by, with much love from JIMMY."

There was a good sisterly letter from Ruth in the package, which Arthur kissed as he laid it down. Then he smiled at Cousin Maria, and said, "Ruthie always helps me when she talks, or when she writes to me."

And lastly there was a letter from Paul, in large *print*



letters, which must have cost him a good deal of effort. It read thus :

"*Dear Arthur*,—Our snow-fort is done, and it is a grand one. I wish you were in it. I would fire balls at you until you were glad to run up the flag, which means 'Hold on!'

"I wish you could have seen Bob, when we first tried him with the sleigh-bells. He did just dance, I tell you! Papa had to take Charley that day; he would not care if we hung bells all over him. Bob does not mind them now.

"Mark made me a snow shovel of wood, and I help dig paths. I had a new sled for Christmas. It would not go into my stocking. Now I must stop. PAUL BROOKS."

I heard from the Doctor's family when the Winter was over, and the glad Summer-time was coming on again.

Arthur had come back, quite improved in health, and able to play and to study once more.

The young people were eagerly expecting their little friends, Eva and Marion, to spend the Summer with them; so there was a prospect that there would still be, at the Doctor's, a merry, happy HOUSEFUL OF CHILDREN.

THE END.























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